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'JINNY,'
A Novel
of
New York Society
by the
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JINNY

By BARONESS VON HUTTEN

PROLOGUE

THE Professor closed his door carefully, and taking his bulging, gray-green umbrella under his arm, shambled off eastward.

The clock of Grace Church over the way had just struck nine. It had always just struck nine as the door of Number 17 closed in the morning, for the Professor, in spite of his amazing absent-mindedness, was curiously regular in certain of his habits.

Mrs. Buck, his cousin and house-keeper, told her friends, over a fragrant cup of tea, when the delightful subject of his peculiarities came up, that she could always count on his outgoings, though never on his incomings, just as he invariably rose at five, winter and summer, whereas only he himself and Mr. Weevil, his tortoise shell cat, knew when he went to bed.

On this particular April morning the sun was shining, and from the heaps of earth and the yawning holes that, as usual, decorated a part of Fifth Avenue, came a faint odor that caused the Professor to pause more than once and sniff with rapture. It had rained in the night, and the wet earth exhaled what seemed to his uncritical nose a smell of the country. From Eleventh Street to the Park is a long walk, but the Professor went slowly, pausing now and then to gaze into an attractive shop window, to give five cents to a beggar—the most ruffianly, conscious of their own unprepossessing appearance, always addressed themselves to him—or to commune silently with himself on some abstruse question that had come up in his studies the night before. For

this was the great Professor Thoyt, who had climbed into higher mathematics than anyone else, at least in America.

At last, a little bunch of violets in his coat, a faint color in his cheeks, he reached the Fifty-ninth Street entrance to the Park and took off his hat with a sigh of content. The Park was the country to him, and he loved it.

A big policeman, magnificent with padding and legal majesty, bowed politely to him. "Mornin', Professor."

"Good morning, officer. I hope you've had that tooth out."

"I did. My wife made me. My wife is a Clancy, sor."

The Professor nodded with due appreciation of this explanatory statement. "Is she, indeed? Well—spring has come."

The policeman turned and watched his distinguished friend out of sight. The Professor was short and heavily built, and his long gray hair blew about in the fresh breeze. Tomorrow, the policeman reflected with a grin, or the next day, or the week, the Professor would appear with, comparatively speaking, not a hair on his head, and his large ears in surprised prominence. For the Professor, scrupulously shaved every morning of his life, loathed having his hair cut, and always put off that operation until advised by some gamin to saw off a few yards, or until an unexpected glimpse of himself in a mirror convinced him that he had got to the Buffalo Bill stage. To that stage he had now come, and his locks were enjoying their last tossing by the wind.

There is a bench in one of the more retired parts of the Park, hidden by a great boulder from the casual passer-by

June, 1910—1

and shaded in leaf time by a tree. This bench the Professor loved, and in his breast called it his own. Red flowers, too, were wont a little later in the year to come poking up through the mold of a large round bed near at hand, and across a long stretch of sward a bit of a bridle path was visible. All of which things lent a charm to the bench. The Professor ambled round the boulder, turned to the right and was about to sit down, when he saw that his bench was not, as usual, empty. Two people, their backs to him, were sitting on it. And one of the people had an arm around the other.

"Lovers!"

The Professor spoke quite unconsciously aloud, and at his words the two on the bench started apart, and turning, looked at him.

"I beg your pardon, sir," the young man said, rising hastily, while the girl again turned her face away. "You said—"

The Professor smiled, and when he smiled something quite wonderful happened to his face, making it, in spite of his great nose, his small, near-sighted eyes and his thick lower lip, amazingly lovely and lovable.

"I didn't mean to speak aloud," he answered, "but as a matter of fact, I said 'Lovers.'"

"Oh!" cried the girl, as if she had never in her life heard anything so outrageous. And then, in her indignation, she turned, and seeing the smile, said "Oh!" again—and this time it was an "Oh" of confidence, an acceptance of sympathy.

"How," asked the Professor after the short pause, "do you like that bench? A nice bench, isn't it?"

The young man burst out laughing. "A splendid and wonderful, a paradisaical and Arcadian bench."

The Professor nodded. "It is *my* bench," he said proudly. "That is, I have sat on it every morning for the last seven years."

"And when it snows?" The girl had a dimple.

"Well—of course, I mean when the weather is not *too* bad. That, luckily,

is not often, for New York has a delightful climate."

This remark required reflection on the part of the hearers, both of whom analyzed it with suspicion. Then the Professor smiled again, and the girl declared with firmness that New York's climate cannot be too highly praised, particularly in the matter of consistency.

"But if this is your bench," the young man added suddenly, "we will go—"

"Go! Good gracious, no! I—I should be very much offended if you went. And, of course, as to its being *mine*—you understand!"

"There is a law about seven years' right, isn't there?" asked the young man gaily. He was a very young man, with merry blue eyes and curly hair.

"There may be—I don't know. But please don't go. I will just rest a minute, and then I'll go and feed the swans. I am very fond of feeding the swans."

"There aren't any swans yet," answered the girl quickly, as he sat down by her. "Listen, Mr. — George," she went on to the young man, taking up a little wicker basket that was beside her on the bench, "I know what we'll do. You and I will walk on a little; we will go as far as the statue and back before we—" She indicated the basket with a wave of her hand.

The Professor looked at her and then at the basket. "Lunch?" he asked.

"Yes; it is such a beautiful day, we thought—"

"What a delightful idea! My dear, I am going now. I wouldn't spoil your picnic for the world."

"Oh, please! We *always* walk before we—that is, we did the other time, didn't we, George? And if you wouldn't mind seeing that no one steals the luncheon," she went on hurriedly, rising and handing the basket to the Professor, "we should be very much obliged. Wouldn't we, George?"

George nodded. He was obviously very much in love, and, what the Professor highly approved, anxious to renew the interrupted *tête-à-tête*. When they had disappeared the Professor set-

tled himself comfortably, his hat on the bench beside him, his legs crossed.

Doing all his work in the afternoon and evening—often late in the night—the mornings were his periods of repose, and during the two hours he spent, weather permitting, on his bench, his tired brain rested. He did not consciously think; he let idle pictures fill his mind, changing as rapidly or as slowly as they chose. Sometimes he slept a little, but not often, and always he went home refreshed and ready for more work.

This morning pictures of the lovers filled his mind. It was pleasant, decidedly pleasant, to come into contact with anything so young and hopeful and gay as these lovers. And they would marry and have nice little pink-faced children, and the children would grow up and be lovers on their own account, and they would marry, and have nice little pink-faced children, who would in turn grow up—

The Professor's mind, having peopled the world with several generations of hypothetical lovers, turned lazily to the luncheon basket beside him. It was a nice basket, of white and magenta straw. He wondered if there was by any chance a hard boiled egg in it. There is nothing more delicious than a hard boiled egg with a pinch of salt; even a crust of bread is delicious when one happens to have forgotten one's breakfast. Ellen had forgotten to remind him not to forget his breakfast; poor Ellen was rather forgetful at times.

When the young man and the girl came back they found the Professor brushing crumbs from his waistcoat.

"Well," he called gaily, "so here you are! Won't you have some lunch? The eggs are boiled to a turn and—" He broke off, struck by something in their faces, and stared fixedly at the egg shells on a paper beside him. Then he looked at the basket and back at the young people. "I—I have eaten *your* lunch!" he said helplessly. "It was *your* egg!"

"I am very glad—" began the girl, and then she and the young man burst out laughing. They laughed, holding

each other's hands, until they were red in the face and almost tearful, and after a moment the Professor joined them. He had not laughed so for years, and when at last they all stopped, wiping their eyes and breathing unevenly, he said: "I declare to you that I am not a thief. That is, I never was before. I am simply an old idiot. Will you forgive me?"

"There is nothing to forgive," they answered together. "And please don't mind," the girl went on. "I am so glad the egg was good! There are more, too. Oh, you mustn't go! It—it isn't polite to leave a party before everyone has finished."

She sat down as she spoke and took three eggs and a packet of sandwiches from the basket. "Here, George—and," turning to the Professor, "here is another for you. I hate eggs. You see, here is a piece of chicken for me."

The Professor laid his hand for a moment on hers. "My dear young lady, you are very kind and good to me, and I will stay with pleasure if you will promise to come to lunch with me tomorrow. I am *not* a lunatic. I am Professor Thoxt, and I live with my cousin, Mrs. Buck, at 17 West Eleventh Street."

The young man bit his lip and then said suddenly: "Professor Thoxt, I am very happy to meet you, sir. I am George Lassels, of 802 Fifth Avenue, and this lady is—Miss Jane Sweet—who is going to marry me."

The girl turned, all the color gone from her pretty face. "No, no—not that!" she murmured, looking at the scrap of chicken in her hand.

"You are, Jinny," insisted the young man; "so don't be a goose."

The Professor, who knew the outside of the Lassels house very well, as he passed it nearly every day of his life, and who knew, as everyone does know in this our childishly communicative country, all about the Lassels millions, nodded with much interest.

"I knew you were lovers," he said with a flash of his smile, "and I hope you will be always very happy and very good."

"We are going to be very happy,"

answered Lassels, as the girl's eyes had filled with tears, "and we are going to try to be good."

After a moment the young man turned to the Professor.

"Look here, sir," he said with impetuous haste; "I am going to tell you all about it."

"Oh, no—you mustn't, George!"

"Be quiet, Jinny. Everyone in New York knows who Professor Thoyt is, and as I am in a hole, I'm sure I couldn't ask a better person to advise me how to get out of it. It's this way: I am just twenty-one and Jinny is eighteen. You know who my people are—a stuck-up lot, without any sense of humor, or their own pretensions would amuse them! Why, my great-grandfather was a blacksmith! They have forgotten all about him, though, and all about my grandfather—up to the time when he found gold in California. Well, Jinny's people are—poor. And until three months ago, when she was ill, Jinny worked in a shop—in 'Mimi's' hat place, Fifth Avenue and Forty-first Street."

"We made Parisian hats," put in Jinny with a little flash of pride.

"So my aristocratic family objects!"

George Lassels frowned as he spoke, and then, looking into the Professor's curiously opaque eyes, waited for an answer.

"Dear me! Dear me!" said the Professor.

"Yes. Now I want Jinny to marry me, right off the reel, and let them raise—whatever they like! I'm the only son, and I have a little money of my own, anyway."

"If I were Jinny," returned the Professor without a minute's hesitation, "I'd marry you, as you say, right off the reel; and then, if I were you, I'd work."

Lassels rose triumphant and held out his hand. "Thank you. Thank you very much. I've got my law degree and can hang out my shingle tomorrow. My plan is to go West, where there is more room—" He broke off expectantly. Jinny had risen, too, and when her lover had finished speaking she turned to the Professor.

"You are very good and very kind," she said slowly, "and I am going to tell you the rest—what George didn't tell. You see—there's my father."

"Well—surely *he* doesn't object!"

She shook her head sadly. "Oh, no; he wouldn't object. But my father is a bad man. And—if I married George, George would never be rid of him. Father would always come; he would always want money and—George would be ashamed of him. "I," she added bravely, though with a tremor in her voice, "I am ashamed of him, not because he is poor or—not a gentleman, but because he is—what he is."

"Dear me!" repeated the Professor.

"And—what is he?"

Jinny's eyes were of that loveliest of all colors for eyes, a deep chestnut, and whatever the weather might be, they were always full of light as though some otherwise unshining sun shone on them because it loved them.

"Bad," she said sadly.

"Poor Jinny! But what else? I mean, what does he do?"

"He paints black eyes."

The Professor stared. "Paints—"

"Yes—so that they, the people who have got the black eyes, can go to their work as usual."

Dan Sweet was lying flat on his back drinking whiskey and water. This sounds easier than it is, and his shirt, not over clean, and his mulberry colored waistcoat were damp with his miscalculations in distance, but between the evil of wasting a few precious drops and that of getting up every time he was thirsty, he had chosen and abided by what seemed to him the lesser.

The room was dirty and untidy; the one window was grimy, the square of carpet torn, the table piled high with newspapers, cigar boxes, bottles, soiled collars, and other uncongenial articles. The bed on which the man lay was unmade, and the man himself unshaven, dirty, unwholesome, sinister and brutal. This was Jinny Sweet's father, and in looking at him one wondered with a pang of pity what her mother had been like, and rejoiced that she was dead.

JINNY

"Come in!"

Someone had knocked, and Sweet set down his glass.

A child entered, hopping on his clumsy wooden crutch like a lame sparrow.

"'S a gentleman. Wants to see you."

"A case?" growled the man, sitting up and yawning.

The lame sparrow shook its head. "Nope. An old gentleman. Says he wants to see you on business."

"Business! Oh, well, bring him up. Somebody's got an eye, that's sure." But when Professor Thoyt came in, Sweet suddenly lost faith in that potential black eye. It would not have been the first time that he had been fetched by a brother or a cousin or a friend of the invalid, and he had been prepared to listen with his usual grin of acquiescence to the story of the edge of a door or the corner of a shutter that usually accompanied the arrival of a call to a patient of the better sort. He was prepared to accept any explanation, and to take his valise and accompany the messenger, but he knew the moment he saw the Professor that this was not a "house call."

"Mr. Sweet," began Professor Thoyt politely, "I am pleased to meet you, sir."

"Thank you."

"I—I understand that you are a—a painter of black eyes."

"Or blue or green or yellow. At any stage."

"H'm!" The Professor of Higher Mathematics paused. To tell the truth, he had in the course of his walk downtown forgotten his errand, and on finding himself at the number to which his feet had half unconsciously borne him, discovered that the plan he had intended to make was quite unmade, that he had not even vaguely decided upon his course with the bad Mr. Sweet. And it was confusing to be brought face to face with that sinister-looking dissimulator of black eyes without having an idea of what it would be best to say to him.

"I have never had a black eye in my life," the Professor began at length,

nervously conscious that Mr. Sweet looked perfectly capable of giving, as well as concealing, those symbolic active discord.

"Well?" Mr. Sweet was bored by these polite preliminaries. "Painting black eyes is my business, Mr. — And if you and your friends haven't any need of my professional services, I'm" —he paused, hesitating between two expressions, and then with sudden ferocity went on—"damned if I know why you have come here."

The Professor nodded, not in the least offended, and then with the abruptness of the unprepared, stated his errand. "I have come, sir," he said, "to tell you that your daughter is going to be married at my house early next week, and that after the wedding she and her husband are going West to live."

"Jinny or Sue?" Mr. Sweet finished his glass of whiskey and set it down with a thump on the chair.

"Jinny."

"And in your house! Well, you just tell her—Hello! Who's there?"

It was the lame sparrow who had knocked, and this time, with a smile of as much pride as if to his own feeble fist were due the honor of providing a case for his patron, announced that "a feller with an orful eye" was there.

Before he had finished speaking, the man with the "orful" eye had thrust him aside and entered with a loud, boastful laugh.

"The other chap's been taken to the hospital, Sweetie," he said, pushing the bandage back and displaying something that turned the Professor sick. "But I guess you are doctor enough for me."

Sweet sprang off the bed, and forgetting, or feigning to forget, his first guest, led Number Two to the window.

"The other chap must have been a steam hammer, Dave," he observed with unconcealed satisfaction. "You darned near lost that peeper."

Dave nodded, and sitting down, watched the preparations. The battle had taken place the day before, and the contusion had now mellowed to a rich

plum color. "Had raw beef on it all night," he went on, as Sweet washed his hands in a very septic-looking basin. "Hello, sweetheart—who's your friend?"

The Professor, who was standing watching Sweet's proceedings, smiled absently. "Thoyt," he said—"Barnabas Thoyt. If you have no objection, sir, I will watch the—operation."

"Oh, I don't care, if Dan don't. No danger of your setting up an opposition parlor, I guess!"

Sweet, who was mixing colors in a saucer, gave an inarticulate growl.

"The gent and me, we've got business. Now then, Dave, hold still and I'll fix you all right."

Dave was very quiet, and for five minutes nothing was heard but the slight noise made by Sweet as he worked. The Professor stood, his hands behind his back, deeply interested. Sweet was very skillful, and his hand was light. When at last he laid down his brush and Dave turned, the Professor burst into a sincere murmur of admiration.

Sweet nodded. "Oh, yes, it's pretty good. No one does it any better, that's sure. Now then, Dave, clear out, will you?"

Dave produced a dollar, laid it on the table and left. Then Sweet turned again to the Professor.

"Well," he said, "go on. You say Jinny is going to be married. I've got nothing aginst that, but if it's Sue, I'll not have it. See?"

"I never heard of Sue," returned the Professor, "and it is Jinny. I may assume then that she has your consent?"

"Oh, I don't care what she does. She's no good to *me*. You're sure," he added suspiciously, "that it ain't Sue?"

"I give you my word of honor that it is not Sue."

"All right. You can give 'em my blessing. What's the man's name?"

The poor Professor, who knew that he had forgotten the one thing Jinny impressed on him as of the greatest importance, stared helplessly. What would have happened if the door had not again opened, admitting a lady

much the gayer for liquor but badly battered about both eyes, no one knows. This lady, on seeing the Professor, at once claimed him as her own Sammy, and in his horror he took up his umbrella and hat and fled from the room.

"He said," the Professor announced somewhat shamefacedly an hour later to Jinny and George in his own study, "that I might give you his blessing."

"And you didn't tell him my name?"

"No—oh, no," answered the Professor proudly.

Jinny drew a deep breath of relief. "Nor your own, of course?"

"Dear me! I—do you know, I rather think I did tell him my name. I am very sorry," he added apologetically, "but I quite forgot."

The wedding took place a few days later. George had told his father of the step he intended to take and had been unconditionally cast off by that patrician. This fact, instead of troubling the three conspirators, appeared to delight them. The Professor was convinced that St. Louis would receive the young pair with open arms and shower gold on the newly arrived lawyer. "Work, you know," he observed at the wedding breakfast, "is delightful. Of course, you miss the poetry of higher mathematics, but all work is splendid, and Jinny, too, will be busy keeping house."

George beamed at his wife. "Not much housekeeping in a boarding house, but still—"

"I am going," Jinny said firmly, "to make hats—Parisian hats; and I shall sell them to big shops and make a lot of money."

"Of course you will. And you will write and tell me all about it, won't you?"

Jinny looked at the Professor with a sudden trouble in her eyes.

"I do wish you had not told him your name."

"Why, my dear? He can't hurt *me*!"

"No, but he may bother you. If he ever gets very hard up, he will be sure

to try to find me out, and he may even want you to give him money."

The Professor, whose close shaven head gave him such a strange air, shook that head with gentle vehemence.

"I shall not give him money. I have very little, indeed, and I certainly sha'n't think of giving it to a ruffian—H'm! I quite forgot for the moment, my dear—and, anyway, he did paint that eye like a real artist!"

I

NINETEEN years had passed since that wedding day, and April had again come round. Laughing, crying, coaxing, false, enchanting April! And the Professor was sitting at the round table in his dining room, eating his luncheon.

His hair, now almost white, was long. He was fatter than of old, and his face was crossed and lined with wrinkles. He was not a beautiful old man, just as he had not been a beautiful middle-aged one, but as he looked up from his omelette and smiled at his *vis-à-vis*, she exclaimed suddenly: "Oh, Daddy, how I do love you!" And, indeed, the beautiful, humorous, tender smile had grown the more lovely with the years. Jinny was right.

This, however, was a new Jinny—a tall, thin Jinny, with the exquisite grace of the very young American girl who is going to become that rather rare but incomparably beautiful creature, a splendidly built American woman. Jinny was going to be broad in the shoulders, slight in the hips, full of bust, long of limb, slow of movement. She was going to be well muscled, without angles, curved where she ought to curve and straight where she ought to be straight. As yet she was too thin, but there is great beauty to the artist's eye in that awkward grace that was hers. And her brown hair had gold lights in it; her skin was white and clear and downy, her eyes brown and wide apart and her red, mobile mouth, merry and tender.

She was lovely, and she was the Professor's by right of inheritance, for the

mother had died when she was only two, and a month later her father had appeared with the child in his arms.

"I am dying," he said sadly, "and I have brought you Jinny."

And he had died, and the Professor, at fifty-four, had developed a most amazing talent for caring for and amusing young children. Mrs. Buck, his cousin, taught him many things, but although she, too, adored the baby, the Professor outdid her in skill as well as in tenderness, for he was a genius.

And Jinny was the most remarkable child in the world! Sometimes, as he passed the big house on Fifth Avenue where Jinny's paternal grandfather lived for some years after the child's birth, the Professor wondered whether it were not his duty to tell that lonely old man of the splendid little creature. But George Lassels had forbidden it. His father had refused to see him, and had said things about the now dead Jinny that could not be forgotten.

Once the Professor saw a wedding party coming down the steps of the house, and he knew that the radiantly beautiful young bride, whose hair shimmered under her veil in the sun, must be the Margaret of whom George had spoken to him, the second sister, who had been a child when he had gone away.

But the Professor had promised the dying man, and he kept his word. He had never taken a step toward bringing his Jinny into relations with her father's people.

So Jinny grew and grew in the Professor's house, and Mrs. Buck taught her to sew and to cook, and the Professor taught her to read and to write and something about geography and a great deal about history, all in his own way. And in the last named science the way was very peculiar. On the left hand pages of an old account book the Professor wrote in large, fair characters the word "Bad." And on the opposite page, the word "Good." Then, when a century of the world's history had been studied on broad lines, he would say: "Well how many bad ones can you think of, Jinny?" And Jinny, to whose

weaker memory the bad ones were intrusted, would name them solemnly. And then every time the wonder happened, that to every bad one she could remember, the Professor could name at least two good ones.

So that Jinny, when in reading she came across a very evil or very mistaken character, began at once to search in her memory for the good ones to turn the balance. This is not the usual method, but it has its advantages.

And so, as the Professor, that spring morning in 1900, smiled at her across the table, her own answering smile was almost as cheery and confidently happy as his.

"You are nearly eighteen," he said, "and your clothes are too short and too tight. I am ashamed of you. Today we are going to buy you a new dress. Blue—with trimmings."

"But, Doddy, Aunt Ellen and I have nearly finished my new one."

"Bosh!" said the Professor with scorn and really pitiable ignorance. "This one is to be much finer. It is to be ready made."

Jinny flushed with pleasure. It would certainly be wonderful to have a ready made dress. "Oh, how lovely! But Doddy, why?" she asked after an ecstatic pause.

The Professor laughed mysteriously. "Because you are so dreadfully old," he teased. "Because—you just wait and see!"

And Jinny waited, sewing busily as she did so, and when the Professor had had his nap, the two started out on their wonderful errand.

The big department store was very crowded, but the "ladies' and misses' division" was quieter. Jinny sat down and listened while the Professor and a young lady, who bulged beautifully but queerly under the arms, had a short conversation. Then the young lady nodded. "I know exactly what you want," she said, as cordially as if it were not her business to be heartbreakingly proud to the humble customer.

"Come on, Jinny. Miss — h'm — this lady is going to help us."

Jinny followed the young lady into a

small pen with ground glass doors, and a few minutes later was trying on one blue gown after another. Bright blue and soft blue, striped, spotted, serge, cashmere, long-haired silky stuffs, with names invented the day before and destined to be forgotten the day after—they followed in quick succession.

The Professor, who went out for a breath of cooler air into the great room, forgot to return, and was found several divisions off staring meditatively at a manikin tastefully attired in rabbit wool underclothing, but at length the choice was made, and Jinny, looking very sweet and pleased in the new gown which required only a slight alteration that she meant to make herself, took his arm and led him safely home.

"Don't I look grown up, Doddy? What will Aunt Ellen say?"

Aunt Ellen was delighted and admiring. She was a very short old woman, who looked as though her legs had been sawed off at the knees, but when she was sitting down, so that this peculiarity was not visible, she was as big as most people. She had a round face, with somber eyes and a very small, pointed nose, and she curled her hair on leather and iron things called "Langtrys," which she wore only at night, except when preparing for some unusual festivity in the evening, in which case they appeared for an hour or two during the afternoon.

When Jinny had shown the old lady the new gown and run to the kitchen to display it to Hannah, the negro cook, and was taking it off, preparatory to taking it in a little under the arms, where, alas, she did not bulge like the young lady in the shop, she exclaimed suddenly, "Why, Aunt Ellen! The 'Langtrys'! Are you going somewhere this evening?"

Mrs. Buck smiled. "Am I not? Hasn't your godfather told you, my dear?"

No, Doddy had told nothing.

And Doddy entering just then, it all came out. They were all going to see "A Royal Family."

Jinny had been to the theater but twice in her life—once to see "The Old

"Homestead" and once to hear "Poor Jonathan." Lillian Russell, whose photograph she had bought the next day, was an angel of blonde beauty, but now she was to see Annie Russell, about whom she had heard the girls in the gymnasium rave. This was bliss, indeed.

And so that evening she saw the beautiful comedy and fell madly in love with the delightful Cardinal. So she sat very still, forgetting her new gown, forgetting the mysterious delight of driving home in a cab, forgetting even her godfather, as the old man had taught her to call him. She was far away in that delightful little kingdom in Germany.

Two men sat in the row in front of the little party to the left, and one of them presently caught sight of Jinny's rapt face.

"I say, Juggins, look at that girl—there by the old man with the long hair. Isn't she pretty?"

Juggins, who was several years older than his friend, put on his eyeglasses and turned. "Oh, lovely! What a beautiful face!"

"Wait till she turns, old man; her profile is perfect."

"So's her front face. Are you falling in love with her, Bobby?"

Bobby, who was very young, not more than twenty-two, flushed and felt for his mustache. "Nonsense!"

Juggins turned to the stage again. "Rail not, O youth, at your divine weakness! It is the very best."

The curtain had gone down, so they talked on at their leisure.

"Why don't you do it yourself, then, Harding, if you think it so delightful? I'd change quick enough if I could, and take your—your imperturbability. Heaven knows, my 'divine weakness' has made me suffer enough!"

Stuyvesant Harding did not smile, but the muscles in his cheeks quivered for a moment. "My dear Bobby, every temperament has its drawbacks, but your talent for tumbling in and out of love every week or so seems to me a charming one. And if I were you, I'd fall violently in love with the beauty in

the queer gown, and pass a few sleepless nights and so on. I wish to heaven," he added, with sudden vehemence, "that I could!"

Bobby was silent. For the moment he had forgotten a story he had heard about his friend, and now he rather wished that he had held his tongue. He was proud of his friendship with Harding, who was nearly fifteen years older than he, and very fond of the man, but sometimes he did not understand him, and the story in question was a very ancient one, and might not be true at all. The beauty in the queer gown was talking to the old woman with Brussels sprouts in her bonnet, and—Heavens and earth! She had a dimple in one cheek, and her little teeth were as even and white as the kernels on a cob of young sweet corn.

"Where are you going, Juggins?" Harding had risen and was passing him.

"Margaret Inglis is up there in a box; I'm going to see her. Wait for me at the middle door when the thing is over. We'll go to my rooms and I'll read you that letter."

Bobby watched his friend's tall, well set up figure disappear, and then with a little smile looked up at the box whither Harding was bound. It was such an old story. Wherever the two went together, old Juggins was sure to leave him if Mrs. Inglis was present. Bobby wondered whether it were possible, as his sister insisted, that Harding was still in love with the beautiful blonde. Bobby, looking up at her, told himself gravely, with the severity of twenty-two toward a lady who is not only aged but one's own distant cousin, that she must have been very handsome a few years ago, but that he was hanged if he could see what Harding could see in her now. Why, she must be thirty-two or three! Whereas, the girl behind him was as young as—as a fresh rose.

Meanwhile, Stuyvesant Harding had made his tranquil way upstairs and entered Mrs. Inglis's box. She was sitting, as was her wont, not quite in the front of the box, and she was alone, except

for her friend, Miss Brown. Miss Brown was rather a mystery to the uninitiated; plain, forty, more than simply dressed, rarely speaking, she was considered justly very unattractive, and no one understood why Margaret Inglis took her about everywhere. It was not as a foil, for Margaret had never been vain; and Miss Brown was not a paid companion. Few people knew that the reason was that intangible one—liking. The lovely Mrs. Inglis loved the plain Miss Brown, who had never accepted from her so much as a hat or a cab fare, and the plain Miss Brown, instead of adoring her beautiful friend, accepted the other's affection on perfectly equal terms, if not even a little *tendant la joue*.

On this particular evening Mrs. Inglis was more than usually lovely in a simple gray gown, and Miss Brown, in a black silk that had seen many seasons, was quite as plain as ever. A blonde of thirty-three, who can wear pale gray *crêpe* without any jewels or flowers, must be a very beautiful blonde indeed. Mrs. Inglis was very beautiful. American women, taken as a whole, are the prettiest women in the world, but beauties are rare among them, and Margaret Inglis's beauty had from her earliest girlhood been indisputable. She was tall, rather too slight, but exquisite in her lithe grace, and her mouth and chin were wonderful, being almost identical with the mouth and chin of that splendid creature foolishly called the Venus of Milo. Her nose was good, her eyes blue and dark-lashed, and her hair, the only golden hair in New York society, was still golden, though less brilliant than it had been.

Stuyvesant Harding sat down by her when he had shaken hands with Miss Brown—Mrs. Inglis never shook hands with anyone—and of course asked her how she was enjoying the play.

"Fairly well. And you?"

He laughed. "Thoroughly. When I wish to see again a play I know well—I saw this in London last year—I bring Bobby with me; his criticisms and tolerances delight me. He is now falling in

love with a girl in a deplorable blue gown whom he does not know."

"Again!" Mrs. Inglis raised her exquisite upper lip a little in a way that was hers and adorable. "Poor Bobby!"

"Lucky Bobby, Margaret."

"Why?" asked Miss Brown suddenly. Miss Brown sometimes talked, when only Mrs. Inglis and Harding were present.

Harding laughed. He was that very exceptional creature, the American who, after living for years in Europe, comes home without any exotic mannerisms. It was exactly the place for a Parisian shrug, but his broad shoulders did not stir.

"Because a man—and Bobby is going to be a man one of these days—who falls in love often never falls in love deep. He may be pretty constantly damp, but he never drowns."

Miss Brown nodded. "True. There are people," she added drily, "who are in no danger of drowning, and yet prefer to spend their lives in water up to their chins."

Harding rubbed his own chin thoughtfully. "You mean me, and you are a malicious, disagreeable woman."

Mrs. Inglis put up her glass, and without noticing this little dialogue, bent forward and looked for several minutes steadfastly at one point in the parquet.

"I see your blue girl," she said at last, still gazing downward. "Do you know who she is, Stuyve?"

"Haven't the most attenuated ghost of an idea. Pretty, isn't she?"

"She's—lovely. And do you know who she looks like?"

"No."

"Then you must be blind. She looks like me—or, rather, like George; and I believe," she added, her voice falling suddenly, "that she is George's daughter."

"My dear Margaret," exclaimed Miss Brown, "what an idea! George never had a daughter!"

"He may have had dozens, Emma, for all we know; and he did have one, for—that is she. Take the glass and look for yourself."

The curtain had long since gone up, and the play was drawing to its close, but the three friends talked on with that cheerful comfort which is the box-holder's privilege.

Miss Brown, on examining the unconscious Jinny through the glass, drew a deep breath. "Yes—I believe you are right, Margaret. The child is the image of George. Who can the old man be, though?"

"The grandfather, no doubt. The girl was a nobody, you know. I never knew her name, even—I was only thirteen. Poor George!"

After a moment she went on hurriedly: "Stuyve, I know you will help me. Would you mind hurrying down and—stalking them, until I can get to you through the crowd? You are so tall, I can see you anywhere, and—if they want to go, just ask them to wait one moment. Tell the old man my name, if you like."

Harding obeyed, as he had obeyed her for years, and a few moments later stood by the middle door of the theater, waiting for the Professor and his family. They had not hurried, however, and reached him just as Mrs. Inglis and Miss Brown approached from the stairs.

"I beg your pardon—"

The Professor turned, to find himself addressed by a very beautiful woman, wrapped in a loose white cloak.

"I am Mrs. Roger Inglis," she said simply, "and I wish to ask the name of this—child," laying her hand lightly on Jinny's arm.

"Madame, her name is Jinny Lassels," answered the old man, taking off his hat.

"Then—she is my niece. I am George Lassels's sister."

"Oh!" cried Jinny, while Aunt Ellen's large face stared open-mouthed up from among the people who were, as she afterward said, scrouging her to death because she was so small.

"You are—her grandfather?" went on Mrs. Inglis courteously.

The Professor shook his head. "No, madame; I am—nothing but—a friend. They were married in my house, and

when he was dying he brought her to me."

"I see. Will you," she went on with instinctive consideration, "tell me your address, that I may come to see you, and her?"

The old man gave his address, and then Mrs. Inglis took Harding's arm and was about to go, when Bobby, who had joined the group and stood looming above them all but unnoticed until now, burst out suddenly: "Oh, I say, Cousin Margaret, please introduce me!"

"Jinny," said Mrs. Inglis quietly using the strange name with perfect glibness, "this is my cousin and yours—Robert Lassels."

"Juggins," declared Robert Lassels a few minutes later, forcing his friend to stand still in the street and looking at him solemnly, "I mean to marry that girl."

"Young Bobby," returned Harding as gravely, "if you had married all the girls you have vowed to me you were going to, you'd be either in Turkey or in Sing Sing."

II

THREE weeks later Mrs. Inglis was lying on a *chaise longue* in her dressing room, her right hand holding a book that she was not reading, her left being surrendered to the tender mercies of a rather handsome woman no longer quite young, but well preserved and smartly dressed, as fashionable manicures are apt to be.

"Madame's nails are very well, today—very well," this person began, after a long pause. "Madame will have found my salve of a—usefulness?"

"Yes, it is very good," returned Mrs. Inglis indifferently. "I wish it were not scented, however. Don't point my nails too much, please."

"*Tiens!* Madame will not have them pointed? But Madame Vandergould and Madame Astorbilt wear theirs so. It makes longer the hand, madame."

"Mrs. Vandergould and Mrs. Astorbilt may wear theirs as they like, Madame Suzanne; I wish mine *not* pointed, please. And not too much polished."

The manicure worked silently for a few minutes, doing her work with a light hand and much dexterity. A clock on the chimney piece struck four. Outside a slow spring rain was falling and a smell of wet earth came in from the open window in the next room. Fifth Avenue was, as usual, being improved, and passing vehicles pursued their devious course past great excavations and mounds of heaped-up dirt and broken sections of pavement.

Madame Suzanne approved of Madame Inglees—and of Madame Inglees's dressing room. Many ladies were tasteless, overloading their private apartments with silks and brocades, overfilling them with easy chairs and downy divans; but this room was almost bare. White wardrobes, built into the walls around three sides of the room, contained the beauty's gowns; the bathroom adjoining was of simple white tiles; the dressing table was provided with iron brushes and boxes; the curtains and *chaise longue* were in artistic, flowered chintz, and the electric lights were well arranged.

Madame Suzanne had two customers who slept in magnificent beds that had belonged to Marie Antoinette, and another who bathed her face in a silver bowl that had belonged to Ninon de l'Enclos, that exemplary woman. Mrs. William Jaxon's toilet service was in *repoussé* gold, with diamond monograms; Mrs. Alexis Washington-Jones's bathroom walls represented a field of enamel and gold daisies, the eye of each flower being a beveled mirror; and Mrs. Ned Wilbur's bedroom was a bower of hand-embroidered white satin.

Madame Suzanne was a very smart person and condescended to manicure the nails only of the very richest in the great town, but she was a shrewd woman, and realized perfectly the difference between good and bad taste.

"As madame heard about Miss Evangeline Curry?" she asked at length.

"No." Mrs. Inglis was not encouraging, but the manicure persevered. Ladies are so different; some are so stand-off, while others are so friendly and enjoy a bit of gossip.

"She's run off with that young man—Mr. Malton."

Margaret dropped her book, as she brought her chair around to the other side of the *chaise longue*. "Harry Malton!"

"Yes. I was there this morning—this is Mrs. Curry's day, but she couldn't see me. Miss Foster, her maid, told me."

"Indeed! Oh, you hurt me!"

Evey Curry was a favorite of Margaret's.

"When were they married?" she asked suddenly.

"The day before yesterday; Dr. Ellis married them. They 'ave gone down to Ol' Point. I hope they will be 'appy", she added. "Miss Evangeline was always very kind to me."

"Yes, she is a very sweet girl."

There was silence, while the clock ticked solemnly in the gray light.

"Madame does not like gossip—oh, I know! But everyone is talking about it—Mrs. Washington-Jones told me. Mr. Vail has his divorce, and is going to marry Mrs. Prescott *tout de suite*. Is it not *triste*? And Mrs. Chase 'as written her sister that she will have her decree soon." Margaret did not answer, and the woman went on, a little note of sadness in her voice, "Mrs. Chase is so pretty, and so—*douce*. She was always very kind to me."

"Yes, she is very nice."

"Is that nail right? Ah, but madame 'as the most lovely thumbs in New York! Madame laughs, but it is true! How many ladies have good thumbs? One in a 'undred. Someone knocked, madame!"

"Come in!" called Margaret, and Jinny came in.

A radiant, transformed Jinny, fresh and lovely as of old, and yet exhaling a certain air of smartness that was new. She had lost nothing, and she had gained a quiet, gentle assurance, a modest consciousness, that was delightful.

And what had wrought the change? Clothes—much abused, overrated, underrated, misunderstood clothes!

Mrs. Inglis had, the day after the play, visited the Professor, and by her

so doing, each of them gained a friend, almost an adorer. Everything in the shabby, quiet house had pleased the young woman, and when the Professor, quite unembarrassed at being caught in a remarkably ancient dressing gown, had smiled at her, she had almost fallen in love with him. He, on his side, declared suddenly, quite unconsciously until he heard his own words: "She is perfectly beautiful, and a good woman." This had, of course, not displeased Mrs. Inglis, and then Jinny had been sent for and every word she said had shown her aunt that her education left, in one sense, at least, and that the most essential one, nothing to be desired. Jinny was a lady, whoever her mother might have been, and in addition to this she was a beautiful, simple and lovable young girl.

Would Jinny come and pay her new-found aunt a visit? No, came the prompt answer; Jinny could not leave Doddy. She would come to see—Aunt Margaret—she uttered the name shyly—as often as Aunt Margaret would let her, but as to her ever leaving Doddy, even for a day, that was altogether impossible.

Then it was decided that Jinny was to go with Aunt Margaret to Aunt Margaret's own pet importer and try on clothes. To this proposal there was no demur. Doddy was delighted at the thought of his darling having fine gowns, and Jinny secretly wished that the pet importer would turn out to be the young lady who bulged in the Sixth Avenue department store. The pet importer, however, lived in a brownstone front in Forty-third Street, and looked like the traditional French marquise, and she nearly shed tears over Jinny's stays, and would do nothing for that young vandal—the wearing of three-dollar stays is a crime amounting to vandalism to French marquises of that particular type—until the crime was repented and made good. The Professor, when the stays came home in a box covered with lovely glossy wild roses, thought it a pity that they were not to be worn outside.

Little by little Jinny's wardrobe was

completed, and the lovely and soothing knowledge was hers that she was perfectly dressed and that there wasn't even the smallest wrinkle in the world across her shoulders. So it was a transformed Jinny who came into her aunt's room that rainy afternoon.

"Well, my dear, out in the rain?"

"Doddy had to go out, so I came with him—in a cab. And the cab is to wait and take him home. The last time he went out in the rain the poor dear trudged all the way down from Forty-eighth Street with his umbrella *under his arm*. He forgot that he had it."

"He is a dear old man."

"Yes," answered Jinny, taking off her jacket and sitting down. There was a great deal of meaning in that one word.

Mrs. Inglis watched her for a moment and then said: "You know you are dining here tonight?"

"Of course I know. Did you think I could forget?"

"Wear that little white frock, dear; the one with the daisies."

Jinny looked up, a pretty blush creeping under her smooth skin.

"I am to have—roses; can I wear roses with that dress, Aunt Margaret?"

"And who is going to send you roses? Don't tell me it is Bobby—again!"

"But I must! It is he. He really ought not to," she added earnestly; "they are so expensive."

Mrs. Inglis laughed. "Never mind that side of the question," she began, and then, with a warning glance at the manicure, changed the subject. Meanwhile Madame Suzanne had completed her work and now rose.

"Madame, I might ask whether mademoiselle 'as already a manicure? Because I 'ave an hour free today—"

Mrs. Inglis turned to Jinny. "Oh, yes, dear, I want you to have your nails done; I had forgotten it. Can you stay now, Madame Suzanne?"

But yes, Madame Suzanne could stay, and would be rejoiced to do her best for the beautiful little hands of mademoiselle, which were already *soignées, du reste*, and needed but a trifling

attention. Jinny sat down, her brown eyes full of wonder and interest. Her hands were small and white, but the nails, well shaped and glossy with health, were not like polished rose leaves, as her aunt's were. It would be delightful to have them rubbed and made pink and pretty.

While Madame Suzanne took the temperature of the soapy water in the little basin with as much care as if it had been a fever patient, Mrs. Inglis, in her bathroom, washed her own hands to take off the manicured look, and then went to and fro between her bedroom and her dressing room, arranging various little matters with her maid. At length, however, she passed into her bedroom and closed the door, after telling Jinny to follow her as soon as Madame Suzanne's important seance was over.

"Mademoiselle has beautiful hands," began the manicure as soon as they were alone.

"Have I?" asked Jinny simply.

"Yes, mademoiselle. Very mooch like Madame Inglees's own. I was telling Madame Inglees, 'ers are *the* most beautiful in the city. A family 'and, I suppose?"

"Perhaps," assented Jinny, pleased.

"The mother of mademoiselle is surely the sister of Madame Inglees?"

"Oh, no. My father was her brother. My name is Lassels."

The manicure glanced quickly into the girl's face and then turned her handsome dark eyes away.

"And mademoiselle's mother? Forgive the *curiosité*, mademoiselle, but I serve for long years the *aristocratie*, and I seem to see a resemblance in mademoiselle to—the Astorbilts."

Jinny shook her head carelessly, watching the sharp scissors that were shaping one of her nails so rapidly but with such unerring skill. "Oh, no; I am no relation to the Astorbilts."

"Perhaps," went on Madame Suzanne musingly, "it was the Vandergoulds I meant—one mixes the names; that is we poor foreigners do."

But Jinny looked up, with another shake of her head.

"No, no. My mother was not at all—fashionable."

"I know. So many of the very finest families are poor, but poor of real poverty—the Sandersons, for instance, and the Winburs. Very sad."

Jinny thought her most sympathetic.

"It is a consolation for us humble workers," went on the woman after a pause. Then Jinny laughed.

"My mother was poor, but she wasn't like the Sandersons or the Winburs. She was a 'humble worker' herself. My godfather has told me how she worked in a shop once."

"In a shop! I, too, long ago, worked in a milliner shop. Perhaps, by chance, I knew her."

Madame Suzanne's face was pale as she spoke, but she did not look up, and her polisher worked quickly as she waited for an answer to her suggestion.

This answer came promptly. "Her name was Sweet," Jinny said—"Jinny Sweet. I am named for her."

"*Est-ce possible?* Who would think," mused the manicure, rubbing a little more paste on Jinny's wedding ring finger nail, "that mademoiselle is the daughter of a poor working girl? Mademoiselle, I—knew your mother well!"

"You knew my mother?" Jinny flushed with interest. "Oh, tell me about her!"

She could not remember her mother, and thanks to the Professor and Aunt Ellen, had never missed her. It was more an instinct than a living feeling that caused her flush, but it was a very keen interest. Madame Suzanne did not answer for a moment, and then, still working busily, she said: "She was a very dear friend of mine, mademoiselle. We sat together in Madame Pinson's atelier, Fifth Avenue; we were hat trimmers."

"I know. And she lived in a room high up in a poor street with another girl, a girl named Dean."

"Yes; I—was the girl named Dean. My mother was French, and my—husband, but my father was James Dean, a glazier. Ah, to think that you are poor Jinny's daughter!"

Jinny sighed. "I was only a year old

when she died. I cannot remember her at all. Tell me more about her."

Madame Suzanne wiped her fingers energetically. "I 'ave no time now," she said. And—Madame Inglees would be angry."

"Why?" asked Jinny with simple wonder.

"Why? Ah, because she is a great lady, and I am only a poor manicure."

"That is—nonsense. Of course, I want to hear all you can tell me about my mother. When did you see her last?"

"A few days before she—married," returned the woman, and then, after a moment's reflection, shook her head.

"I am here," she said, "in my *capacité professionnelle*. I must not talk more to you, mademoiselle. I am poor, and if Madame Inglees should be angry with me I should lose much. I should not 'ave spoken, but—I was fond of Jinny. I 'ave a picture of 'er always on the table in my poor room."

"Oh, *please* show it to me! Really, you are quite mistaken about my aunt's being angry. She does not mind at all that my mother was poor; she is very good to me. Please tell me more. I will go and ask her permission, if you like."

But Madame Suzanne caught her wrist and held her in a close, strong grip. "Non, non—you must not! I beg you, mademoiselle. You do not understand these things. Madame Inglees is an angel, but—she is a *grande dame*. She would be annoyed. I should not have risked so much for the sake of speaking to you about your mother, but I—I was fond of 'er, and—I lost my head. Promise me that you will not mention it to Madame Inglees."

"Very well, I promise," said Jinny reluctantly. It seemed to her very foolish and unreasonable, but as the woman had been betrayed into what she believed to be danger, although Jinny knew it was not, through her love for Jinny's mother, Jinny could not refuse her the consolation of the promise.

Madame Suzanne drew a sharp breath of relief and dropping the girl's hand, said in a different voice: "I beg

mademoiselle's pardon, and thank her for her kindness. If mademoiselle will sit down, I will give just one *coup* to her nails."

Jinny sat obediently still, her interest in her own hands quite dead. If only Madame Suzanne were not so strange, and would tell more about her old friend! Aunt Margaret had told her long stories of her father's boyhood and youth, and shown her photographs of him; it was hard she must renounce learning about her poor young mother.

Madame Suzanne, however, was strictly businesslike until the end of her work, after which, putting her instruments and boxes into her neat little alligator handbag, she put on her jacket and took leave of Jinny with a respectful bow.

III

"JINNY," said Bobby solemnly, "you are a dream tonight!"

"Bobby," returned Jinny as gravely, "you are a—goose tonight!"

And when a young maiden calls a young man a goose, it is a sign that they are on pretty good terms.

Bobby had, indeed, at once claimed the privilege of a cousin to call the girl by her Christian name, and after a few days it seemed perfectly natural to her to call him by his.

He was the first arrival at the dinner on the evening of the interview between Jinny and the manicure, and the two sat together on a big divan in the drawing-room. Jinny wore the white gown with the daisies, and the roses were left at home.

"Aunt Margaret told me not to carry them, and she says you mustn't send me so many," she had told him, whereat he had made a hideous face and answered that Aunt Margaret was a horror. Then he had added that Jinny was a dream.

"As to my being a goose," he said in answer to her retort, "you are very much mistaken. I am the youngest of five, and being the only *man*, I have *all* the brains of the family."

Then they both laughed delightedly.

It wasn't particularly funny, but they were both young, happy and pleased to be together again.

While they were laughing Stuyvesant Harding came in. He looked tired, almost ill, and when he had greeted Jinny, sank down into a deep chair with a sigh of relief.

"Bobby, you young sinner, why haven't you been to the office the last three days?" he asked, taking off his rimless glasses and pressing his fingers to his eyes.

Bobby's rosy face assumed an expression of the utmost amazement. "Not been to the— Why haven't I?"

"Haven't you!"

"But, Juggins, are you perfectly sure I haven't?"

Jinny giggled; it was such exquisite silliness.

"Perfectly sure. Mr. Boynton is very much annoyed—I met him just now at the club."

Rising, Bobby began dancing an impromptu dance, waving his long legs and brandishing his long arms in a way that suggested danger to the furniture and even to the electric chandelier.

"Poor Boynton!" he exclaimed at last, pausing, out of breath. "Just fancy his feelings! 'Oh, Bobby, we have missed you'—"

He stopped speaking as Mrs. Inglis came into the room. "Good evening, Stuyve. How are you, Bobby? I am sorry to be down late, but—well, to tell the truth, I set myself on fire and had to dress again!"

Harding looked at her, and Jinny, who was watching him, saw how every bit of color left his face at her aunt's words.

"I have something to ask you Stuyve," went on Mrs. Inglis quietly. "Will you come into the library with me?"

"Certainly. With pleasure."

With one of the little formal bows that made him, to Jinny, seem so old, he followed her across the hall into the dimly lighted library.

"Are you—hurt?" he asked unsteadily.

"No. It was my sleeve, and scorched

my arm a little, that was all. Well, Stuyve, you saw him?"

She had turned and stood looking at him. They were almost of a height, so that her eyes were raised but a very little.

"Yes, I saw him."

"How—was it?"

"Bad, Margaret—heartbreaking and hopeless. It—nearly kills me to see him. I—I am completely knocked out."

"You look ill," she answered gently. "It is very good of you, Stuyve."

"Yes, it is good. I wonder sometimes at my own goodness," he answered bitterly. "Goodness is often another name for weakness, for—indolence. I go because I am too weak to refuse you, but—what good does it do?"

"You are wrong; and you know that you are wrong. I heard a ring, Stuyve. We must go back into the drawing-room. But before you go I must thank you again. You are the best friend I have in the world."

He was looking away from her and did not turn his eyes as she spoke. His set face looked hard and unresponsive, almost sulky. With a little sigh she added: "Come. The people are arriving."

It was a small dinner, only fourteen people; and Jinny, whose escort, to their delight, was Bobby, asked him question after question about the ones who interested her. The man on her other side was a Frenchman, who spoke very little English, and on her telling him that she knew no French whatever he stared at her as if she were a curiosity of some kind and then devoted himself to his other neighbor, Mrs. Ned Peele, whom Jinny already knew.

"Who's the big blond man next Aunt Margaret?" the young girl asked.

"That's an Englishman—or Irish, a chap named Yelverton. Rather splendid, isn't he? Strongest fellow I ever saw. He was at the athletic club the other day. He spars like a demon."

"And the woman next Mr. Peele—the one in pink? I didn't hear her name."

"Give it up. Looks like a sea horse,

doesn't she? That's Mrs. Washington-Jones with the stained glass front to her gown. Disgusting to mix colors like that! The finest rubies in America, though. I say, Jinny, doesn't Harding look ill?"

"Awfully! He quite frightened me when he came in. Is he—delicate?"

"No. But, poor old chap, if what they say is true, he's got a pretty hard row to hoe, you know."

Jinny, who was nibbling an almond, raised her eyes to his. "No, I don't know; why is it?" she asked. But Bobby had turned to his other neighbor, none other than Miss Brown, and for a few minutes Jinny was left to herself. She did not mind this; no feeling of being neglected came to torment her; she was not self-conscious enough to wonder whether other people thought her neglected. The table was so beautiful, flooded with the soft rose-colored light from the inverted-boatshaped shade that hung over it; the jewels sparkled so brilliantly; the flowers smelled so sweet. Aunt Margaret looked very tired—almost as tired as poor Mr. Harding. He must have been handsome when he was younger, though never so strong and gigantic as Bobby.

They were all old at the table, except Bobby and herself. It was sad to think that their lives, the real lives, were all over. Her grave, young eyes, resting on one face after the other in innocent scrutiny, seemed to see in each one what she called "a sorry look."

They all looked sorry for something—all but herself and Bobby. Then Bobby turned, and she told him her thought.

"Yes," he assented, his honest gray eyes as serious as her own for a moment; "I suppose you're right, Jinny. They are all sorry for something or other. Older people always are, you know. Even Mr. Peele and Evelyn—and they are pretty happy! I suppose he's sorry about his son's marriage, or because his daughter is such a—such a brute. And Evelyn—she's my cousin, you know—is sorry because *he* is. That," added the athletic philosopher of twenty-two, "is life."

"I suppose so. My godfather isn't

sad, though. He is very old, and he is as happy as—as I am."

"He's a dear old man, Jinny. I suppose it's because he's always been so awfully good that he's so happy; don't you think so?"

Bobby almost whispered this dangerous theory; it would have been fatal to him if anyone had heard.

But Jinny, to his surprise, shook her head in positive negative.

"Oh, no; lots of 'sorry' people are good. Just think how good Aunt Margaret is—and Mr. Harding and Mr. and Mrs. Peele; and yet they all look sorry about something."

"Are they all so good, Jinny?"

"Of course; my godfather is, too—oh, so good! But so are they, and yet they are not as happy as he. Bobby—" The girl hesitated. The two young heads, her smooth brown one and his curly yellow one, were very close together now, so close that Yelverton, who sat next his hostess, drew her attention to them with kindly amusement.

"Young Lassels seems very devoted to the pretty girl in white," he said. "He is a nice boy."

"Yes," returned Mrs. Inglis a little absently. "I am fond of Bobby. You think he is—devoted to my niece?"

"It certainly looks that way, don't you think so? If she was my niece I'd let her marry him," he added unexpectedly.

Mrs. Inglis turned, her eyebrows plainly expressing her surprise and the Englishman, who knew that he was being a little presumptuous, and who, as it happened, was in earnest and did not much mind a possible snub, bowed his head.

"Yes," he repeated slowly, "I'd let her marry him if I were you. I know you think me an impertinent wretch, but—if they are in love with each other, for heaven's sake don't be overprudent because they are young. I've no pretensions to saintliness, but I've seen something of mankind, Mrs. Inglis, and if I had sisters I'd marry them off young."

"Would you?" Mrs. Inglis took his

remarks as simply as he had made them. Sometimes, she knew, charming *vauriens* like Pat Yelverton can be very serious, and at such moments they speak from depths of experience to which saintlier men never attain, which gives great value to their honest opinions.

"My niece is very young," she added after a pause, during which they had both watched Jinny and Bobby, who were still deliciously oblivious of the unimportant existence of their twelve *convives*.

"Yes, and so is he. I've seen something of the boy at the athletic club of late," resumed Yelverton, "and he is a very remarkably decent young chap. Therefore, why wait until he becomes less remarkably decent?"

"Is that inevitable?" she asked gently.

"Possibly not exactly inevitable, but very probable, indeed. I myself was once a nice young lad, Mrs. Inglis, and—I know."

Mrs. Inglis, who knew something of the man's history, did not answer for a minute. Then she said: "Bobby has been in love many times—or has fancied himself to be. I do not even know that he is in love with my niece, who is also his cousin, but if he is, he may get over it."

Yelverton laughed. "No doubt. There is always some charming and virtuous young matron at hand ready to console lovelorn youths. And the fire has been known to be hotter than the frying pan!" After a moment he added, before turning to his other neighbor: "Of course, I have been very cheeky, and I have nothing whatever to do in that particular galley, but I have taken a fancy to the boy, who will be able to double me up at sparring in a couple of years, and I'd hate to have him get into the wrong hands. Charming and virtuous young matrons with a mission for consolation are, to speak frankly, the very devil, Mrs. Inglis!"

Margaret did not answer, but she did not forget the famous philanderer's lecture.

After dinner Evelyn Peele called Jinny to her and told her that her little

boy, Dino, as Edward Junior was called, was to have a birthday party in a few days. "Will you come, Miss Lassels?" she added, wrinkling her near-sighted eyes and smiling at the girl.

"Oh, Mrs. Peele, I'd love to come! How is the darling? My godfather calls him the Infant Hercules. We met him the other day in the Park, and Doddy adored him."

"He is well. He was very naughty this afternoon; he bit his Aunt Rosebud!"

"Oh, the little Wolcott girl! I used to see her riding her pony in the Park long ago, before Aunt Margaret found me. How funny it is that you are her grandmother, Mrs. Peele!"

Mrs. Peele, who was only about twenty-seven, laughed gaily. "Yes, isn't it?"

Jinny had dropped as if from a cloud into the intricacies of New York society, finding cousins on all sides, for her paternal grandmother had been of old Knickerbocker stock; but the fall had not shaken her quaint composure. It seemed as natural for all these smart people to belong to her as it did to find a friend of her dead mother's in the manicure who attended them.

Margaret had at first watched her anxiously, afraid of discovering symptoms of very natural head turning, but Jinny had gone her way unchanged except in certain little outward things.

"You must *not* tell her she is beautiful, Bobby," his hostess told the huge youth when the men had come in. "I don't want to have her spoiled."

Bobby, who was the soul of frankness, looked down at her with wide open eyes. "Look here, Cousin Margaret—I'm awfully in love with her. If she'll have me, will you let her marry me?"

"Two months ago you were in love with Susie Kane; four months ago with the red-headed Murchison twin; and then there was Lily—"

"Oh, chuck it, Cousin Margaret! I'm in earnest, I tell you! Ask Jug—Harding if I'm not."

"He is still your confidant? Poor Stuyve! Well, I'll not tease you but I

will not have you making love to her yet. Promise me that."

"All right," he returned cheerily. "I'm a deucedly tractable fellow. I give my word of honor not to make love to her until—four weeks from today!"

"Bobby, you wretch!" But he had gone, and Mr. Washington-Jones claimed her attention.

Mr. Washington-Jones was his wife's greatest affliction. He was a middle-sized, middle-aged person who appeared to suffer with hay fever all the year round, and who wore a large gold seal ring, bearing the Washington arms. His great-great-grandfather, Mrs. Washington-Jones was wont to relate, had taken the name Jones from a Welsh uncle who left him an estate with that condition. That the elder Jones still lived in Cincinnati, and still owned the great and prosperous Jones Dollar Ninety-Nine Shoe Company, his daughter-in-law did not mention. Reticence is an admirable quality. Alexis William Washington-Jones now devoted himself to his hostess, as he had been told to do, to that lady's gently dissimulated despair, and after an evening that seemed, according to the mental attitudes of the various guests, years long or minutes short, Mrs. Inglis found herself alone with Jinny, Stuyvesant Harding and Bobby, who had of late been teaching Jinny to waltz, and who now declared that there was no time like the present.

"Do go home, Bobby; you are distinctly outstaying your welcome," Mrs. Inglis said, laughing. "And Jinny is tired."

"I'm not a *bit* tired, Aunt Margaret. But you must be," answered the young girl. "Have you a headache?"

"No—or yes, I think I have. Well, if you must dance, geese, roll back the rugs or you'll break your silly necks."

The geese obeyed, going into the next room, and Mrs. Inglis sat down, closing her eyes wearily.

After the chattering of the recent guests, the room seemed very quiet; the chairs still arranged in little groups, had a strange look, as though invisible people must be sitting in them.

"Margaret"—Harding took off his

glasses, and leaning forward, took her cold hand in his—"Margaret, I can't stand this much longer."

"My dear Stuyve, please don't be a—bore."

She spoke very gently, but Harding started as if she had struck him.

"I beg your pardon," he said stiffly. "And if you will do me the favor of listening to me for one minute, I will tell you what I am going to do. I am going to South America."

There was a short pause, during which Jinny and Bobby giggled with enchanting silliness in the next room. Then Mrs. Inglis said slowly: "People don't go to South America in the spring."

"I do. I'm going up into the Andes. It's cool enough there—"

"Oh, yes, I dare say. When are you going?"

He rose. "I am leaving New York on Thursday. Good-bye."

"Thursday. This is Tuesday. Good-bye."

They stood looking at each other for a moment, and then without shaking hands, he bowed and left her.

IV

THE next morning Mrs. Inglis was sitting at her writing table, when the butler came in, and with a most distressful countenance informed her that there was a man who insisted on seeing her.

"A man, Oscar?"

"Yes, madame. He came already yesterday evening, but I would not let him in. Now he is come again."

"But what kind of a man?" asked Margaret, a little impatiently.

Oscar, blond as cornfields in July, fixed his blue eyes on a distant table. "A dirty blackguard, madame," he said, with gentle pride.

"Oh! You mean—a tramp, or something of that kind? You must not say—h'm—blackguard, Oscar."

"Beg pardon, madame; James said it. Yes, madame, a tramp, a fagabond—"

As Mrs. Inglis was about to answer,

the vagabond in question came quietly into the room. It was Dan Sweet, nineteen years older than he was the day of his interview with the Professor; nineteen years dirtier, nineteen years lazier, nineteen years more evil.

"Mrs. Inglis," he began with assurance, holding his hat under his arm and smiling a horrible jagged smile, "I must speak to you—so please send this idiot out of the room. I have come on business."

The polyglot Oscar, much offended, drew his fingers slowly up into his palms and tucked in his thumbs.

"Business," went on the intruder before Mrs. Inglis could speak, "about Jenny Sweet."

Mrs. Inglis changed color. "You may go, Oscar. Give me the bell," she said quietly. When he had obeyed her, she looked up again at Sweet.

"About Jenny Sweet?"

"Yes. I am her father, and I—want to see my granddaughter."

Margaret knew by the same instinct that told her the man was utterly bad that he was now speaking the truth.

"Your granddaughter—Miss Lassels, is not here," she said quietly.

"I know that; but I also know she comes here every day—that you like her—that she is playing to good luck. I'm playing to bad—and I'm her grandfather. You see?"

"I see. Jinny, however, cannot help you. She has no money at all of her own; you will gain nothing by annoying her."

"I know that. But I'll gain something by—annoying you!"

There was no facetiousness about the man, no spurious sentiment; he was cynically frank in his object, and stated it at once.

"It's money I want, of course," he said. "I want to be paid to keep away—well paid, to keep away."

Mrs. Inglis rose and rang, so that he could see her doing it. Then she said leisurely: "Very well. I will ask for advice on the matter and let you know in a day or two. I may pay you to leave Miss Lassels in peace—and I may not."

"All right. If you don't, I don't leave 'er in peace, that's all. When she goes to the theater I'll go, and I'll speak to her and shame her before 'em all. When she is driving with you I'll follow and tell people she's my granddaughter. When she goes to balls I'll be at the awning and ask for a kiss. You will save a good bit of money, for I ain't modest, but she may not enjoy it."

"Show this man out, Oscar, and do not let him in again under any circumstances. Give me your address, and I will write you my decision," she added to Sweet.

He took a scrap of paper from his pocket and laid it on the table. Then, without a word, he followed the servant.

Mrs. Inglis stood for a long time when he had left her, her beautiful face very pale. She loved Jinny, and she loved the memory of her dead brother. Sweet was not only repugnant and horrible, but he was dangerous to both. A sudden vision of the girl's innocent, happy face came before her, and her eyes filled with tears. A happy youth is so much; nothing in the world can ever make up for the loss of it, and Jinny, she knew, would be miserable if she learned that this frightful man was her grandfather. If many thousand dollars paid into that dirty hand could have insured the silence of the foul mouth, Mrs. Inglis would have paid them at once, but she was too wise not to know that such a man would never be satisfied.

At last, crossing the hall and going into a little room near the library, she rang the telephone bell and gave a number.

Poor Jinny! And the poor old Professor! It was her fault, Margaret Inglis's; she it was who had drawn the child from her safe obscurity. "Hello!"

And then, on hearing Harding's voice, she remembered what had occurred the evening before—that he was going away—that he had said good-bye to her.

"Oh—Stuyve," she stammered, "it is I, Margaret. I'm sorry I—I'm so sorry—"

There was a short pause, and then he

said gently: "What are you so sorry about?"

"That I called you up. I—I am in great trouble, and so, of course, I thought of you. I forgot—that is—"

Breaking down completely, she pressed her forehead hard to the box, furious with herself, almost crying with vexation over her confusion.

"In trouble? Good heavens, Margaret! I—here—I'll come up at once."

"No, no, never mind—you are busy, I know. I can manage it alone, I dare say."

"Nonsense! I'll be there in a quarter of an hour. Good-bye."

She rang off and went quietly back to her morning room. There was a faint smell of spirits in the room, and with a gesture of disgust she opened a window, letting in a gush of fresh spring air. As she stood looking out, one hand pressed to her head, she saw something that caused her to start back with a little cry. Opposite her house, one of New York's beanstalk buildings was bursting out of the earth, and on a pile of lumber at the foot of it sat Dan Sweet, smoking a cigar and evidently comfortably ensconced for a long wait.

"He is waiting for Jinny!" Margaret exclaimed aloud.

Five minutes later her maid had left the house with a note for the young girl, the contents of which would, without alarming her, effect her absence for that day at least. Then Mrs. Inglis sat down and gave herself up to the patient fulfilling of the dreariest task in the world—waiting.

Harding arrived a few minutes later in a hansom, which he at once dismissed, and went into the house. Sweet watched him with an ugly look. "That's the chap who's going to advise her. He'll advise 'no blackmail,' and then I'll scare her bad and she'll hand it over and not tell him. That's what's going to happen," he told himself with a satisfied nod. Then he lighted another cigar, whose foul odor poisoned the air, and began puffing thoughtfully.

Meanwhile Harding had gone into Mrs. Inglis's morning room and stood in

front of the woman to whom he had said good-bye the night before.

"Now tell me all about it," he said. "I suppose it's about—him?"

She shuddered. "No, no; not that. It's about my poor little niece, Jinny."

"Jinny! What on earth has she been doing?"

"Doing! Nothing, the poor child. Stuyve, you remember all about George's marriage—"

"Only that he married someone—impossible. I was in Europe that year, and never heard any particulars."

"Well, he married a working girl named Jinny Sweet. She was, Professor Thoyt tells me, very good and nice, not at all what my father, quite without investigation, took it for granted that she must be. She died, you know, a year or so before George did."

"I remember hearing that." Harding was sitting facing the light, and she was struck by the worn expression of his face. He looked very tired, and somehow she had never realized until that moment that he was nearly forty.

"Well," she went on after a pause that was curiously hard to break, "her father, Jinny's grandfather, has turned up—a most horrible creature, with the worst face I ever saw. He came here this morning and told me that he will tell her and everyone that he is her grandfather unless I give him money."

"Blackmail! What did you tell him, Margaret? I hope to heaven you did not give him anything."

"No. I told him I should ask advice of a friend, and then—write to him. Stuyve, what ought I to do?"

Harding was silent for a moment, his eyes fixed with a thoughtful frown on the rug. "Who is the man? What's his name?"

"His name is—Sweet. Ugh! He is frightful, Stuyve—like the tramps one sometimes sees on the stage, so sinister and hard. He frightened me nearly out of my wits."

"Of course he did, you poor child. Blackmailing is a penal offense, Margaret. Have you the fellow's address? I must see him."

Reaching out her hand, she took

from the table the dirty scrap of paper on which Sweet had written his address, and gave it to Harding. "It is awfully kind of you, Stuyve. Oh, I forgot! You can see him now. He's sitting on a pile of boards there across the street, waiting, I am afraid, for Jinny. Don't let him see you."

Harding stood for a moment, his keen eyes studying the apparently unconscious figure of Sweet, and then taking off his glasses, he put the obnoxious paper gingerly in his pocket.

"I'm glad you sent for me, Margaret," he said. "It is an uncommonly disagreeable affair. Jinny is such a sweet little creature, so gay and innocent. It would break her heart if she knew that that old brute is her mother's father. Would you mind sending someone to bring him in? I'd prefer to see him here; it is an advantage, in such matters, to be on familiar ground."

Mrs. Inglis rang and told the obviously disapproving Swede to send James to bring back the vagabond whom he had been ordered never again to admit. Then, as Harding walked restlessly about the room, she said suddenly: "Stuyve, I didn't tell you last night how sorry I am that you are going. Of course, you know best, and—I shouldn't think of asking you not to go, but—I shall miss you awfully."

"Shall you, Margaret?" He was standing at the far end of the room, attentively looking at a picture that hung there. "I've wanted to have a look at the Andes, you know, for a long time, and Bantley West, the Englishman who was visiting the Leveretts last winter, is down there now. It's a good chance."

"Ah, yes, a very good chance. I hope it will be—pleasant."

"Bound to be, my dear girl. Oh," he added, turning and speaking in a different tone, "I meant to write you about—Roger, but I might as well tell you now."

"Yes?" she said faintly.

"Well—there's no use in your going to see him. He is perfectly well physically, but his mind is—gone. They have a new attendant for him; the last one had been—taking bribes."

"Oh! You mean—giving him brandy?"

"Yes. I asked the doctor about him, Margaret. He has had one or two bad outbreaks since we were there that time, but now he is quieter."

"Is he better?"

"No. I told you that his mind was altogether gone. Oh, my God, I hate to talk about it! It is—frightful! And I think you very wrong, Margaret."

"Oh, no," she said, sighing; "I am not wrong. Did he—know you—Stuyve?"

Harding came down to her and stood looking down at the perfect beauty of her delicate profile. "Yes—I'll tell you. It is two years now since you have seen him; and since then, when I have been there, I've told you very little. It seemed senseless cruelty to—trouble you more about him. But now—well, Margaret, I found your husband sitting on the floor playing with two empty cologne bottles and a little glass his nurse had given him. He told me, whom he did not recognize in the least, that one bottle contained whiskey, and the other champagne. He asked me," he went on deliberately, watching her quivering white face, "which I would have."

"Oh, Stuyve—stop! Don't tell me any more; I—I can't bear it!"

"Good! I'll not tell you any more. And I will not repeat to you again, as long as I live, that the man has been an alcoholic madman for ten years—that he does not know you, nor me, his oldest friend, nor even his doctors. I will never again tell you that you are a fool—yes, Margaret, a fool—not to break the tie that—" As he spoke, the door opened and Mr. Sweet came in.

The old man's small eyes were quick enough, and he at once saw the agitation in Mrs. Inglis's face. Naturally, he set this down to himself and his demands. "Well, here I am," he said, with a surly glance at Harding.

Harding sat down and took out a notebook. "Daniel Sweet," he scribbled rapidly, "161 Albany Street. Wants money to hold his tongue about his relationship to—a young lady who need not to be named."

"I'm not a fool," returned Jinny's grandfather with emphasis, "and I know something about—penal law."

"Penal labor, too, no doubt," interrupted Harding absently. "Very well. Go on. What is it that you want?"

"Suppose I wanted to see my granddaughter? Suppose I had a natural yearning towards my daughter's child?"

"You may drop that. How much will you take to keep your mouth shut?"

"I want one hundred dollars a month. And," he added with a grin, "a present on my birthday."

"And if we utterly refuse to give you a cent, what then?"

"She knows what then," with an oblique nod toward Margaret. "I'll tell the girl—by God, I will! And everywhere she goes I'll show up. That's 'what then.'"

"Hush!" exclaimed Mrs. Inglis sharply. "Someone is coming. For a moment all three sat motionless, looking toward the door, and then the door opened and Jinny and the Professor came in.

"Oh, Aunt Margaret, I am so glad you are at home!" cried the young girl, who, in her pretty frock and beflowered hat, was the personification of youth and happiness. "It is Doddy's birthday, you know, and we are going up to the Metropolitan to see the pictures, and then we are going to have luncheon and afterward go to the theater. Who would ever think that he is seventy-three today?"

The Professor smiled. "But we are disturbing Mrs. Inglis, Jinny."

Jinny sat down and pulled off her gloves. "Just a minute, Aunt Margaret. May we go into the drawing-room? I have a surprise for him, and I can only do it there."

"Dear me! Dear me! Another surprise! Look at these new gloves, Mr. Harding. She gave me these, and a big pot of growing violets. And now—a surprise!"

Jinny rose and coming to her aunt, said, laughing, "I *must* whisper. Excuse me, everybody. Aunt Margaret, it's a song I have learned to sing—and

to play the accompaniment; a song my mother used to sing."

Dan Sweet had heard. "My business can wait," he said suddenly, "if you wish to hear—the young lady sing, Mrs. Inglis."

Jinny nodded gratefully to him. "Thank you. Then, if you don't mind, Aunt Margaret?" In silence the little party, minus Sweet and Harding, who stayed to keep an eye on him, went into the drawing-room, where the night before Jinny had had her dancing lesson.

The big piano of inlaid woods was closed, and Margaret, aided by the Professor, opened it. Then Jinny sat down, facing the door, near which Dan Sweet stood watching her.

She had once, several years before, had a few very amateurish lessons from a friend of Mrs. Buck's, and now, during the past ten days, having begun real lessons, she had persuaded her teacher to teach her the simple chords necessary to the singing of the old Welsh ballad, "All Through the Night." This song had belonged to her mother, and had been by mistake left at the Professor's house when the young couple had gone West. Jinny had found it one day; Doddy had told her how her mother had sung it, and the young girl had set out to learn it so as to sing to him on his birthday. And the day before at her lesson it had gone well.

Today, however, with Aunt Margaret, Doddy, Mr. Harding and the old beggar man who stared so, her fingers got all tangled, somehow, and she could not remember how the chords went. There was a discord, a little cry, a childish attempt at beginning over, and Jinny broke down completely, her face very red, her eyes dark with embarrassed tears.

"Oh, Doddy, I am so sorry! I really *could*, yesterday!" she cried, clasping her hands and turning.

The Professor, who was prodigiously fine in a new coat, with a bunch of violets in it, wagged his head reassuringly. "Never mind, Jinny," he returned. "The piano part doesn't matter a bit, does it, Mrs. Inglis? Sing it, my dear, as your mother used to. Just sit down

and fold your hands, you know, and sing."

Jinny obeyed, but there are in this world easier things than singing without an accompaniment, and the old beggar man's eyes bothered her. Her slight voice was perfectly true, but suddenly she forgot the words, and then a very queer thing happened. The old beggar man repeated the line she had forgotten! He had come quite into the room now. Jinny was surprised, but she sang the song to the end, and then, when everyone had thanked her, she said to Sweet: "Thank you for reminding me."

"I used to have a daughter," he said deliberately, looking into her eyes, "and she sang the song. So I knew it."

"Well, Jinny, I think I must ask the Professor and you to excuse me now," put in Mrs. Inglis nervously. "I—have some business to see to."

The Professor rose with alacrity, and Jinny went into the next room for her gloves.

Then Sweet, with a slow glance at the nervous faces of Margaret and Harding, made his point. "I suppose," he said to the young girl, "you would be too proud to shake hands with a poor old man like me."

She gave him a puzzled glance, for he was utterly unprepossessing.

"No. I will shake hands if you want me to."

He took her hand in his great dirty one and looked at it curiously.

"My granddaughter is just about your age," he observed. "How would you like to have me for your grandfather?"

Involuntarily the young girl shrank back from him with a little shiver, and Mrs. Inglis spoke:

"Good-bye, Professor. Good-bye, my dear. If you" she went on hastily to Sweet, "will stay a minute longer, I think—I think we can arrange that little matter."

V

THE Professor and Jinny left the house quite undisturbed by the ominous presence of the beggar, as they both

mentally called Sweet. The Professor had not only recognized the man, but he had not observed the curious little start with which the man had recognized him. Sweet had often cursed himself for forgetting the Professor's name, but it was one he had never heard before, and it had at the time seemed of little importance, as he had meant to continue his interview with his unusual visitor when Dave Bailey's eye was painted. Then the Professor, terrified by the demonstrations of affection on the part of the very drunken woman with red roses in her bonnet, had bolted, and Sweet and Bailey, to whom he went for help, had in vain racked their brains to recall the Professor's name.

The nearest they got to it was Hoyt, and though there were ninety-six Hoyts in New York that year, and two of them happened to be Professors—one of chiropody, the other of some comparative "ology," at Columbia University—neither of them was the one the worthy Sweet wanted. As he had told our own particular Professor, he had no objection whatsoever to having his daughter Jinny marry so long as the more promising Sue were left to be a staff to his old age, but he had not counted on the absolute disappearance of Jinny, and for a few months had tried very hard to find some trace of her. Sons-in-law are sometimes useful, particularly when a peculiarly disgraceful father-in-law is prepared to make his inconspicuousness an article of market value. Jinny was sure to have married some man who would object to a close drawing of family ties, for she had always been too good for the rest of them, in *her* opinion, even going off to live with some other girl, so as to be out of the way; and Sweet felt within his own breast a modest certainty of being able to render his presence in her house sufficiently objectionable to persuade her husband to pay him to keep out of the way.

And imagine the feelings of a father, who, under these rosy circumstances, cannot find the slightest trace of his potentially so useful son-in-law and daughter!

Sweet had been very angry, but his attempts having resulted in absolute failure, he had given up and gone back to his old manner of life, cheered, however, by the undoubted successes in her own line of the lively Sue. Sweet and his daughter lived together, hovering for some time with breathless interest on that line that separates the merely dishonest from the criminal. He was very proud of having never been in prison, and that fact explains much.

Later Sue, who had a really remarkable talent for high kicking, and had been getting good pay at Tony Pastor's, married and retired from public life. Thus the years had passed, and at the end of so many, Sweet had seen the Professor again.

While the man was driving his bargain with Margaret and Harding, the Professor and Jinny made their pleasant way up Fifth Avenue. It was a delightful spring day, one of those blue-skied days when the air is sweet even in cities, and when the stirring of one's hair by the soft breeze is in itself a delight; one of those days when happy people are happier than ever, and when the unhappy wish they could crawl into a dark hole away from all the joy they cannot share.

Jinny walked very sedately, but her feet went with a dancing notion, and her eyes and her heart danced with them.

"Oh, Doddy," she exclaimed once, when they had paused to give ten cents to a legless man who sold matches on a corner, "I am so happy! It is so nice that it is spring, and your birthday, and Aunt Margaret found me. Everything is so nice, isn't it?"

"Glorious!" answered the Professor. "I am very fond of your Aunt Margaret, Jinny. She looks very much like your father, too, and he was one of the most lovable boys I ever met in my life."

"And how good you were to them! Doddy—I wish I could tell you something." The young girl's face sobered as she spoke, and they paused at the corner of Fifty-third Street to let a huge red automobile peopled with horrible

creatures who looked a cross between goblins and deep sea divers dash past them.

"Well, my dear, why don't you tell me, then?"

"Because I promised I wouldn't tell Aunt Margaret, and I'm not perfectly sure that I didn't say I wouldn't tell anyone."

"Then you had better not tell me, Jinny." This much was quite clear to the Professor's mind, but he felt particularly crafty as he went on a minute later: "Was young Lassels at the dinner, Jinny?"

"Bobby? Oh, yes! Aunt Margaret had him especially for me; most of the gentlemen were old and would have hated to take me in." Doddy and Aunt Ellen always said "gentleman" and "lady."

"Hated it, would they? Dear me! Well, Bobby is a nice boy. Do you know his mother?"

Jinny hesitated. "Yes. I have—met her. She doesn't like me, though, Doddy, dear; isn't it too bad?"

Now the Professor was an absurdly unworldly old fellow, but he had heard a thing or two about the polite struggle between Bobby Lassels's mother—once oh, ye gods, a Hammerton!—and another Mrs. Lassels, whose dead husband had been named Frederick, for the great distinction of being called "Mrs. Lassels" *tout court*; there were phalanxes of reasons drawn up on both sides why the head of both sides should do away with the apparently disgraceful prefix, but the point was still a mooted one.

Mrs. Frederick Lassels called herself Mrs. Lassels and Bobby's mother Mrs. Robert, whereas Bobby's mother called herself Mrs. Lassels, and her enemy, Mrs. Frederick. It was all very intricate and extremely important, but the chief result, to the outside world, was that the two ladies hated each other and never for an instant relented in their object of abasing the other. Even the Professor knew that the Duke of Arranza, a Spanish grandee of the very first order, had visited "Mrs. Fred," as the frivolous called her, and that only the circumstance of the Earl of Kil-

kenny having spent two days in "Mrs. Bob's" Newport villa had turned the balance again in that lady's favor.

It was now rumored that the Prince of Wales meant to come to America and to visit "Mrs. Fred," but that halcyon day was yet in the future, so Society was supposed at present, by the two ladies, at least, to be holding its breath to see what would happen next.

And the Professor, pondering on these things, knew that Mrs. Robert Lassels, armed to the teeth for her great fight, could not be expected to look with favor on her heir's admiration for the daughter of her late cousin and "his perfectly impossible wife, my dear!"

And as Jinny was to the old man more than the match for any young man in the world, he was a little troubled at being told that Bobby's mother had not liked his darling. "Didn't she?" he asked.

"No. She was very polite, you know, but she hardly seemed to remember papa when Aunt Margaret told her, and she looked surprised when I called Bobby by his first name."

"What did *she* call him?"

"'My son.' It sounded very stiff somehow. Oh, Doddy, how funny! Here she comes, in that green victoria. And Bobby is with her!"

Mrs. Lassels—or Mrs. Robert Lassels, for it would not do for the humble historian to take sides in such a palpitating question—looking very handsome and very disagreeable, passed in much majesty, her cold eyes fixed absently on her footman's left elbow.

Not so her son. Bobby, very huge and rosy after an early visit to the athletic club, where he had been sparring with Pat Yelverton, nearly jumped out of the carriage in his eagerness to be seen by Jinny. "Hello!" he cried. "How do you do?" They heard him quite distinctly, and then, to his mother's evident disgust, he prodded the coachman violently in the back with his stick.

A minute later, although they had continued their slow progress, he overtook Jinny and the Professor, and was

nearly crushing their hands in his enthusiastic grasp.

"This is luck!" he exclaimed. "I'm as unhappy as a squirrel in a cage when I have to drive, and my mother captures me every now and then—"

"But—will she not be annoyed?" asked the Professor, as the huge youth walked on with them quite as a matter of course.

"Annoyed! Very likely. Poor mother, she is easily annoyed, and I—"

"Easily annoying," suggested Jinny.

After a minute Bobby asked whether the two were bound, adding gaily: "As I'm going there, too, you know, unless you turn me down, I'd rather like to know where it is."

"We are going to the Museum," answered the Professor; and Bobby answered, to be strictly truthful, "Oh, Lord!"

But in the end they did not go to the Museum. Jinny had told the young man something of the story of the Professor's first meeting with her father and mother, of the bench and the lunch basket, and when they had reached the Park he asked a little shyly if they would not show him the famous spot.

"It is just a bench, like any other," said the Professor, but Bobby shook his head.

"Not to *me*, sir," he returned, his honest eyes looking full into the old man's.

So that shockingly romantic Professor, forgetting all about Mrs. Robert Lassels and Mrs. Frederick, about the distance, in this country of liberty and equality, between a rich youth and a poor girl, about all the five million reasons why Bobby Lassels should not be allowed to fall still more in love with Jinny Lassels, and with the tranquillity of spirit given by an absent mind quite as by a good conscience, led those two young things straight over the brink at which they were hovering into the Enchanted Land.

"They were sitting," the old man told them, when they had reached the little nook behind the bowlder, "just there. She was on the left, there, and the basket to her left. Your father's

hair, you know, Jinny, was yellow and curly—”

“Like mine,” suggested Bobby, promptly, sitting down and taking off his hat.

“Very much like yours,” the Professor agreed.

Bobby turned. “You look tired, Jinny; sit down.” His merry young face was full of a certain suspiciously innocent innocence, but neither Jinny nor the Professor noticed it, and the girl sat down as he bade her, her eyes fixed on two riders who were just visible across the long sweep of pale green grass. “What fun riding must be!” she said. “I wish I knew how.”

“Professor,” said Bobby to the old man, who was still standing behind them, though there was plenty of room for him on the bench, “does Jinny look like her mother?”

“How curious, Mr. Lassels! How very curious! At that very moment I was thinking of that very thing. She is very like her mother in figure and in movements; she has her mother’s hair, too. Her face, all but the eyes, is more like her father’s. You look like George, too,” the Professor continued in that innocence of his that was so different from the egregious Bobby’s simulation. “As I look at your backs, sitting there together with the sun on you and the spring grass as a background, upon my word, I could almost believe the twenty years have been a dream—that you are really the other Jinny and George!”

Jinny was still watching the distant bridle path, but Bobby, looking at the old man, whose voice grew every minute dreamier, suddenly extended his left arm—a blue serge arm, exactly like that of the other youth on that long ago day, and very carefully, so as not to startle the young girl, curved it round her waist, without touching her.

“And now, sir,” he asked with a bright flush, “is it not more than ever like them now?”

The Professor smiled at him for a moment, and then gave a funny little bounce and brushed his hand over his eyes.

“Seventy-three today,” he said ir-

relevantly. “Don’t tease an old fellow like me, George—I mean—”

“You mean, ‘Bobby’, sir,” added the young fellow, rising and drawing him to one side.

“Professor, do you like me? I mean, enough for that?”

But Jinny had seen enough of the bridle path, and rose, too.

“And then,” she said, as if following aloud a sequence of thought, “you gobbled up their poor little lunch, greedy Doddy! Did I tell you, Bobby? Dear me!” she went on, taking the Professor’s arm and smiling up at the two men. “Why have you such solemn faces? What is the matter?”

They were silent for a minute, and then the Professor, suddenly holding out his old hand, took Bobby’s young one, and thus, without a word, put into that young one the most precious thing he had in the world. Bobby was rather serious for a few minutes, for, although it was his nature to take everything that came to him in the cheeriest possible way, and he was not at all disposed to look on his young love for Jinny as anything but a delightful stroke of luck bound to make them both happy for the rest of their lives, something in the Professor’s face lent him a temporary gravity.

“Sweetest old boy in the world,” he thought, as they returned to the more frequented part of the Park. “And how he loves her!”

Jinny, meanwhile, suspecting neither Bobby’s love for her nor hers for him, was rather quiet, for she was thinking of Madame Suzanne, her mother’s old friend, and wishing that she could persuade that determined person to tell her more of her mother’s young days.

Suddenly the Professor, who, rather blinded by the bright sun, was strolling along with his stout stick on one shoulder under the impression that it was his umbrella, broke the silence.

“If his mother doesn’t object,” he said decidedly, “I’m sure I don’t see why I should!”

“Why, Doddy, what do you mean?” asked Jinny, while Bobby burst into a roar of delighted laughter.

VI

A FEW afternoons later Stuyvesant Harding was at home stretched out in a Morris chair by a bright wood fire reading Stephen Phillips's "Paolo and Francesca."

The weather had changed, with one of our beloved climate's coquettish caprices, and while the thermometer had dropped ten degrees in the last forty-eight hours, a few large snowflakes danced impishly down past his windows, as if saying: "I know you don't want us, but here we are."

Harding was not a rich man, as rich men go in New York, but he had enough money to enable him to live very comfortably and to indulge to a modest extent his artistic taste, which was fairly good.

The rugs on the floor were genuine Persians, the books in the strong, carved bookcases bound according to their character and temperaments and the few pictures either originals or signed engravings.

Over the chimneypiece hung a delightful little landscape by Thoma, and two charming heads by Helleley were balanced by a small portrait of an old woman by John Sargent. This old woman was Harding's mother, now dead three or four years.

In a small cabinet between the two windows was an assortment of Chinese jade that Harding had collected himself, and over this cabinet, lighted by the stained glass skylight, hung his favorite painting, "Der Trauminsel," by Bocklin.

Presently, laying down his book, Harding turned and let his eyes rest on this picture. It was simple in composition—a translucent southern sea, violet in a beautiful sunset light, and slightly to the left, a little cypress-grown island. At the edge of the water, at a mossy marble landing place, from which marble steps wound up to a round temple glowing yellow in the last rays of the sun, a woman stood waiting, with outstretched hands, the comer in the small boat, the sail of which, delicately curved by the breeze, was impelling it

onward. In the boat was a man, who stood, his arms crossed on his breast, his head thrown back, every line of his figure showing the tense eagerness with which he waited for his boat to touch land. The two faces, the woman's seen in full, the man's in profile, were indistinct. The artist, with his appreciation of the charm of mystery, had left to the looker-on the task of imagining the features, and Harding had long since done so. To his eyes, Margaret Inglis's and his own were painted there—Margaret Inglis awaiting with outstretched hands and eager eyes his coming to her.

It was a very old story, and one that almost every one of their contemporaries in their own more intimate circle had known for years, and to them was summed up in the few words: "Harding came home from Paris to be best man at the wedding, and he's been in love with her ever since."

It is curiously characteristic of American society, whatever scoffers and students of the extreme of badness in that society may say, that the fact of Harding's love for the beautiful woman was accepted by most of those cognizant of it in a way utterly impossible in any older civilization.

When the subject came up, as it of course occasionally did, most people would say with a little shrug, "Poor Harding" or "Poor Stuyve!" as the case might be, and think no further about it. Of course, it was very sad, and as he was a popular man most people were sorry for him, but it was an old story, and had grown to be a part of him, as an empty sleeve might have grown to be.

As to Margaret, no one had ever for a moment suggested that she returned his love. Everyone remembered how she had adored poor Roger, and while in the nature of things her adoration must have died under the coarse of faithlessness and drunkenness he had subjected it to, she had always been curiously cold in her manner towards men, and since Inglis's permanent disappearance, which was made necessary by two distinct attempts on her life, she had changed as little as any woman

who had such a burden on her mind for ten years.

For three years she had traveled, and the first year after her homecoming had lived in almost complete seclusion. The fact that the years of her traveling had been passed by Harding in New York, while he had, on her return, at once gone abroad for several months, may have had something to do with the absence of all gossip about the two. And then, when he did come back and they took up their old friendly relations—Harding was her husband's first cousin, and managed much of her business matters for her—society forgot even to grin. This was, of course, eminently satisfactory to Harding, who had gone his way exactly as circumstances suggested, but there were times when her friendly coldness was almost more than he could bear.

He had never told her that he loved her, though he knew that she knew it, and had not the slightest intention of ever doing so. His mind, which was a just and well balanced one, would have rejected instantly any proposal to add to her troubles that of a hopeless affection, and yet his heart, which was very human and very tired of the dull aching weight it had carried for so long, sometimes rebelled against the misery of unshared feeling.

This chilly May afternoon, as he lay back in his low chair, the man was trying to decide whether his act in giving up at the last moment his trip to South America was one of courage or of cowardice. It had seemed impossible to leave her to face Sweet alone, and yet—

For the hundredth time he had arrived at this point, when his servant, a soft-footed Alsatian, came in.

"Mr. Lassels is downstairs with Mrs. Lassels."

"Good heavens! Mrs. Lassels?"

"Yes, sir. They telephoned up."

"Very well—I am at home. Bring in tea, will you?"

A moment later, when Bobby and his mother came in, Harding burst out laughing.

"Dear Cousin Adelaide," he ex-

claimed, "do forgive me for being so rude, but—I was afraid this infant had gone and married some child and had come to ask my blessing."

Mrs. Lassels smiled a little bitterly. "Robert is not married *yet*," she said with emphasis, while her son, who was helping her take off her moleskin coat, made a horrible face over her head. "It is about that very question that we decided to come and see you."

"We were looking at Webb's pictures, two floors down," explained Bobby, "and it's such a vile day that no one was there, so we took the occasion to do a little scrapping—"

Mrs. Lassels sat down and gave the room a cursory glance through her *lorgnon*. "Don't be vulgar, Bobby," she remarked.

"Thank heaven, she calls me Bobby again, so it will soon be over. 'Robert' turns my blood cold in my veins," added the youth.

Harding looked at them in turn. His own mother had been a Hammerton, so he was distantly connected with the splendid matron before him, but he saw very little of her, and this was the first time in years that she had been in his rooms.

"Dominic will bring in tea in a minute," he said. "I am glad not to have to drink it alone."

"I am sure, Stuyvesant," Mrs. Lassels began, paying no attention to his remark, "that you, who have always been so sensible, will agree with me in the question that has arisen between my son and me."

"May I smoke, Mum?" Bobby was nervous though facetious, Harding observed, and involuntarily the elder man's thoughts turned to Jinny.

"Bobby has met, at Margaret Inglis's, a young girl—"

"My cousin, Mum."

"A young girl whom Margaret has taken up—whether wisely or unwisely is another question."

"You mean—Jinny Lassels?"

"I mean *Jenny* Lassels. Yes—I suppose her name is Lassels."

Bobby rose suddenly and looked steadily at the burning end of his ciga-

rette for a moment. Then he said in a quiet way:

"I'm going to marry Jinny Lassels, Juggins. That's the long and short of it. That is, of course, if she will have me."

"You know yourself, Stuyvesant," cried his mother, "how many times he has been in love. He is fickleness itself—thank God!"

"Has been, mother. *Has been* fickleness itself; isn't any more. I love her, Harding, and—there is a great difference between being in love and loving."

"Is there, indeed?" Mrs. Lassels's voice was not pleasant to hear.

Bobby, however, nodded gravely.

"Yes. Being in love—a fellow can be in love, fall in love, drift into love, a thousand times; it's merely a—a condition. Loving is like a verb; it's something active, final—I can't say it, but—you know, Juggins."

"Yes," returned Harding slowly, "I know."

There was a short pause, and then Mrs. Lassels, too much agitated to remain quietly in her chair, rose and moved restlessly towards the fire.

"You, Stuyvesant," she said, "are old enough to remember my husband. You will not have forgotten how—how strange he was, and how some of his ways troubled me. When I became engaged to him my mother warned me. 'These Lasselses,' she said, 'are new people, Adelaide; they have not our ideas.' And she was right. Robert, when I married him—later, thank heaven, he changed—had absolutely no sense of—caste. I remember once when we were visiting the Somersetshire Hammertons"—Mrs. Lassels always spoke as though America were an English county—"how some of his ways surprised them. And then George, making that horrible marriage with a woman—"

"Mother!" Young Bobby's face was very stern and like his dead father's as he interrupted her.

"Be still, Robert! I say that your Cousin George made a most unsuitable marriage that was felt almost as a disgrace by all of us, and now you tell me

that you wish to marry his—and *her*—daughter."

There was such real distress in her face that the youth softened.

"Listen, Mum," he said gently, taking her hand and looking down at her; "you must see that the cases are very different. Poor Cousin George's wife, to look at it from your point of view, may have been rather—rather undesirable, as she was a working girl with—relatives and friends who might have turned up at any time. She had been brought up as the children of the poor are brought up; she may have had no education, though," thinking of the Professor's account of her, "that seems hardly likely. Whereas Jinny—Miss Lassels—has been brought up by the famous Professor Thoyt, whom everyone knows to be the most respectable of men as well as the best mathematician in America. He is her godfather, and his cousin has been like a mother to—Miss Lassels. And now Cousin Margaret Inglis has discovered her—her own brother's daughter, remember—is very fond of her and wanted her to go and live with her—too many 'hers,' but you understand me. Jinny is *very* well educated, as well as the most beautiful girl in town, and I really do not see why you will not be proud to have her for your daughter, if she will have me."

Harding listened dreamily. The boy's earnest face pleased him, and his reasoning was pretty well adapted to Mrs. Lassels's limitations of sympathy. After a pause, she answered:

"You are very eloquent, indeed, Robert. As you know, I cannot prevent your marrying—my kitchen maid, if you choose to do it. But—I can refuse to accept your wife. Stuyvesant, surely *you* agree with me?"

Harding did not turn his head. "Oh, no," he said quietly; "I disagree entirely."

"You disagree?"

"Yes. I like—Jinny Lassels, and I admire Professor Thoyt, and I—love Bobby. So much being said, anything else would be superfluous."

The thin-faced man with the tired gray eyes seemed to the young fellow

at that moment something approaching a heartbroken angel.

"Oh, Juggins, dear old chap!" Harding held out his hand without otherwise moving, and after a pause added: "You are laming me for life, you young giant."

Bobby dropped his hand and looked at Mrs. Lassels, who was fastening her mantle with slow dignity.

"I am sorry I disturbed you, Stuyvesant," she said; "you have always in your own affairs shown so much sense."

Harding laughed, as the door opened and the tardy tea appeared.

"Have I, Cousin Adelaide? That is pleasant hearing—and novel." As the servant left the room he went on, pouring tea with the rather pathetic dexterity of some old bachelors: "I think, as a matter of fact, that I have made a greater muddle of my affairs than any man I know."

Bobby, who was always sympathetic, but whose heart in its present state had become almost painfully *mitführend*—there is no English word for it—knew that his host was referring to his unfortunate love for the beautiful Mrs. Inglis. Therefore, Bobby turned and gave a charred log on the hearth a sudden kick, as an outlet for his own feelings.

Not so Mrs. Lassels, who was one of those terribly courageous women who never flinch when it comes to probing other people's wounds.

"Of course, I know," she said, speaking with unusual distinctness and dignity, as if by giving her words a certain official air she justified their impertinence, "that you are referring to Margaret Inglis. Don't interrupt me, Stuyvesant. Of course, everyone knows and sympathizes with you in that matter, and although you say you have made a muddle of your affairs, meaning *that* one, I do not agree with you. Mrs. Vandergould and I were talking of it the other day, my poor boy, and we agreed that your conduct towards Margaret has been—irreproachable."

Harding put the sugar tongs quietly and carefully into the cream jug, and

Bobby, swinging round, said: "Oh, damn it, mother, what brutes women are! I beg your pardon—sorry I said it, but—it's true. Come on, let's go; it's—frightfully late."

But Harding laughed. "Never mind, Bobby. You can't deny that you know I love Margaret, can you? Then why not talk about it? I am glad, Cousin Adelaide, that you and Mrs. Vandergould approve of me, but honesty compels me to state that Mrs. Inglis's absolute indifference to me may have something to do with my exemplary behavior. Now let us go back to Bobby and his Jinny. She may refuse you, young 'un, you know."

"Of course she may; no earthly reason why she shouldn't."

"But several *worldly* ones why she shouldn't," added his mother with emphasis.

"We needn't squabble about it, anyway. If she'll have me, I shall marry her. And I shall hope that you will forgive me. If not—"

The big youth shrugged his shoulders eloquently, and his mother paled. She was a worldly, selfish, rather unscrupulous woman, but he was her only son, and she was a widow.

Harding, seeing her face softening, set down his cup.

"Don't you think you'd better be kind to him?" he asked gently.

"Mum, she's an angel. She's—an old-fashioned girl; she sews, and—just think how you'd love her!"

Bobby had his arm about his mother's girlish figure now, and his mouth was close to her ear.

"I think it a *great* mistake," she faltered, "but—at least, Bobby, she has no relatives on her mother's side? No low uncles or aunts?"

"No!" shouted the boy, knocking her bonnet and part of her hair over one ear in his delighted embrace. "Not a soul, God bless her!"

"Then," said Mrs. Lassels slowly, "as Stuyvesant approves—and you insist—and as no horrible complications with vulgar people need be feared—"

Harding had risen, and stood in silence, looking out into the dusk.

VII

It was after six o'clock when Madame Suzanne left Mrs. Peele's, and as she had nearly an hour to wait before she could go to keep an appointment that she had, the pleasantest way to spend the time was to walk down Fifth Avenue. It was a beautiful evening, and America's most characteristic, most interesting thoroughfare was at its best in the clear light. A crowd of for the most part well dressed saunterers passed steadily along the wide pavement; smart women in French clothes; smart men in garments evidently from Saville Row or Conduit Street; pathetic old dandies shambling gently out of respect to their aged legs; magnificently built Jewesses; handsome, straight-legged children; shabby *courreurs de cachet*, one or two invalids leaning on stalwart paid arms; aristocratic dogs, poodles and hounds as big as ponies; a Turk, scarred with smallpox, a tray of curious pipes hanging from his neck; a Greek flower seller, hardly intelligible in his cry of "Fresh violets!"—negroes, Japanese, a scurrying, soft-footed John Chinaman; a missionary monk just from Europe on his way to the West—who can describe Fifth Avenue late in a fine May afternoon?

Madame Suzanne was not young, but she was not old. At her best moments she looked thirty-four or five, at her worst forty-four or five, and as a matter of register, she was not quite thirty-nine. More than one head turned to look at the handsome, well made woman, with her curiously glowing eyes and her Oriental carriage. She walked slowly with a graceful sinuousness that usually comes, if not from Eastern blood, from severe and continuous muscular exercise. Her gray gown fitted extremely well, and was, indeed, made by the well known Parisian, Madame Moriarty. The small flat hat, that was so well set on the thick hair, was simple but pretty, and possessed, with its bunch of brick colored geraniums, more of that indefinable, worth-its-weight-in-gold-quality *chic*, that one usually finds in the headgear of women of her class.

This, however, was to be explained by the simple fact that the hat, was made by another of the cosmopolitan "Madames" with whom New York abounds—Madame Guggenheimer. Madame Moriarty, by chance, an old friend of the handsome manicure, condescended to make her a gown occasionally at a somewhat lower price than she asked her other customers, and the Guggenheimer hat was the result of a certain skillfully managed little operation off the beaten track of Madame Suzanne's regular business.

And Madame Suzanne, as will be seen, had various irons in the fire; hers was an inventive and a painstaking mind, and added to these excellent qualities were those of daring and danger loving. Women who possess these four qualifications are rather unusually well equipped, it will be admitted, for the struggle of life. She knew how to seize opportunities and to hold them, as well as how, with infinite patience, to create them.

As an instance of this, she added quite an appreciable sum to her modest banking account by buying in Fourteenth Street a certain fairly good rouge, softening and refining it with some simple composition of her own and selling it in unlabeled porcelain pots at a high price to various of her customers, each customer believing herself to be the only one thus favored, and each one convinced that the cream was the origin of the beautiful soft crimson in Madame Suzanne's own cheeks. As a matter of fact, the beautiful soft crimson in question was the gift of nature, and had not the slightest connection with "Rose Matinale" as the rouge in the unlabeled porcelain pots was called.

When the city clocks were striking seven, Madame Suzanne had reached a certain street in the thirties, and turning westward, quickened her pace and made her way on past the brownstone fronts to a block of lower brick buildings, variegated with an occasional dingy white frame house, and from which the river is not distant. Going up the long unpainted "stoop" of one of

the wooden houses, the manicure rang, and while she waited, turned and watched the shabby buildings opposite, two children playing hop-scotch, a baby bawling in an apparently deserted perambulator, a drunken man gibbering solemnly to himself as he tried to turn the corner.

At last the door was opened by a fat negress, who, wiping her steaming gray hands on a very dubious apron, flattened herself as much as in the nature of things was possible against the wall and said politely:

"Evenin', Miss Noble. Fine evenin', ain't it?"

"Very fine, Mignonette," returned Miss Noble with the same courtesy, as she passed. "Has Mr. White come yet?"

"Oh, yes'm. Mr. White's been here a long time, Miss Noble." Then Mignonette went back to the kitchen where she was washing dishes, and again turned her mind to planning for the seven little Jeffersons who were hers, and who showed an energetic and ill directed talent for boring their little black toes through their boots and their little black elbows through their coats and frocks.

Meanwhile Madame Suzanne had made her way up two flights of dark and narrow stairs, and opening a door at the back of the house, had gone in without ceremony of knocking.

The room was bare and sordid. The one window showed the backs of dingy red brick houses; the carpet was worn and torn; the one table was shaky and covered with ink and grease spots. There were but two chairs and the whole place bore the curiously hopeless look common to those few rooms, except those of the very poor, that have on their dull walls not even the humblest attempt at decoration. Not a picture hung there.

And yet the room, sordid and miserable though it was, looked, somehow, too good for its present inmate. The inmate, decently dressed, and with a gilt watch chain spanning his portly front, sat by the window smoking. It was Dan Sweet.

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"Hello!" he said with his surly growl, as the door opened. "Late, as usual."

"Shut up, father! And you needn't glare at me. Just remember that I'm not afraid of you, will you? It'll save time and words."

"All right, I'll remember. I want some money, Sue; hope you haven't forgot *that*," he answered imperturbably.

She had sat down, and as he finished speaking, slipped off her neat calfskin shoes.

"I'm as tired as a dog," she sighed deeply. "Trot, trot, trot, from morning to night; my feet are round on the soles! You want money, do you?"

Her change of tone was curious. It had become, by the mere turning of her mind to the subject of his desire, as furious and threatening as if they had argued the matter for an hour. "You old brute, I want money from you. Hear?"

Sweet scowled. "Hear? Of course I do; I ain't deaf, am I? Don't be a damned fool, Sue."

"Don't *you* be one. Did you really think that *I* wouldn't hear about your little visit to Mrs. Inglis? And of your nice little bargain with her? I tell you, father, you and I could be very useful to each other if you'd only realize once and for all that I'm a good deal smarter than you."

Montaigne's famous remark, "When I play with my cat, who knows that I do not amuse her more than she does me?" was curiously exemplified by the relations of this father and daughter, substituting for the verb "amuse" the more serious one "use."

They had been partners in more than one confidential little matter; they had hung together with a curious affection and admiration for each other, and neither of them would have betrayed the other under any consideration, although they fought, called each other ill names and continually tried to outwit each other in the very matters in which they were working together. They had lived apart for years, Sue not even knowing where the old man passed

his nights. They did not bow to each other when they met by chance in the streets; this room, hired on the pretense that Sweet was a typewriter and she a newspaper worker, was the only place in which they ever met. They worked together there, completing their dark schemes, trusting each other absolutely with what they *did* tell each other, and each one keeping back something, each one believing the other to be the cat with which he or she played.

Sweet smoked in silence for a few moments after her question. He was, in truth, not surprised that she had discovered the immediate use to which he had put her discovery, and he was prepared for a torrent of abuse from her. This, however, did not come.

She sat, her tired feet on the window sill, her handsome head thrown back a little, staring out into the evening light for what seemed a long time.

Then she said, quietly enough: "It was just like you to try to do me and keep the money all yourself, but that's no matter. A hundred and fifty dollars, *my* share of the first payment, is very little. I'm tired of little things. I tell you, father, it's enough to drive a woman mad to live as I do, seeing all the things those other women have, the jewels and the dresses and the houses. Pierre was about right when he used to get on his high horse and curse the rich."

Pierre had been her husband, a consumptive Frenchman of decidedly anarchistic tendencies. "Why should they have everything and I nothing?"

"You might a' had everything, too, if you'd taken up with young Gibbon," suggested Sweet. As a rule, Sue was as chary of her words as he himself, but occasionally a fit of "gassing" came over her. In that case, he told himself, let her "gas."

She looked up at him, her black brows knitted. "Gibbon! That's a nice thing for a man to say to his daughter! No, thank you. I'm bad enough, I suppose, and I'll be worse, too, before I'm through, but I've always kept respectable and always mean to." She had extorted money by blackmail;

she had, once in a while, under unusually favorable circumstances, stolen some small article of great value, but—she considered herself respectable. This is worth thinking about.

Sweet, who had some sense of humor under his grim exterior, grinned behind his cigar. "Good girl," he said; "you do credit to my bringing-up."

She answered him with a look that was a curse and he went on, talking with one side of his mouth, between puffs of his foul weed. "Look here, Sue; I seen her—Jinny's daughter."

"Did you?"

"Yes. Talked to her, too. Mrs. Inglis was scared to death. 'Fraid I'd tell the girl who I was. The old man was there, too—the one who came to my place years ago—you remember Dave and me never could remember his name."

"Does *he* know?" asked the woman suddenly.

"No. But a man was there—a middle-aged swell I've seen lots of times. *He* was there; he did the talking."

"Stuyve Harding. Well, you've been and put your old fool of a foot in it, father, for the girl, Jinny Lassels, is engaged to young Bobby Lassels, as they call him—or is going to be. And if you hadn't thought you were so damned smart, we could have got something out of him, too!"

"Good God!"

"Yes. Now it's too late. Oh, I was mad at first, I can tell you; I could have choked you when I first heard it—"

"Who told you?" he asked, curious even in his disappointment.

"That's none of your business. But now—I've been thinking. I saw the girl again today, and she's crazy—" She broke off, and lowering her feet, put on her shoes in moody silence.

"I've been thinking," she resumed at last, "and if I could trust you, I'd tell you. I can't do it alone, and you could help me, only you're such an old idiot."

It had grown darker; the pink glow was gone from the sky; Sweet could barely see his daughter's face. He rose and took a box of matches from his pocket.

"No—don't light the gas, father. Sit down and listen. Will you promise to do what I tell you?"

"Yes," answered Sweet crossly. "Go on."

"Well, I'm sick and tired of living like this. I *hate* living with Mrs. Masters; I hate bad food, and I hate walking in all kinds of weather. I also hate electric cars and stages. I want to have money, enough money to live comfortably."

She paused, and Sweet, leaning forward, studied her face curiously.

"I want to live with poor people and be richer than they are," she went on. "It's *hell* to spend your time with rich women when you're poor yourself. And I'm dead sick of flattering them and telling them how lovely their shapeless, flat nails are and how young they look, and how—I'm sick of the whole business. Today I had an idea. It's a—a big idea, father. We never did anything like it before, but such things are done, and with success, so why shouldn't we? If we're careful, and if you do what I tell you, and don't go branching out on your own hook, we can do it all right. Will you?"

Sweet cleared his throat. "Of course I will, Sue. You and me have always gotten along all right together—"

"You've got to do what I say, though," she insisted, not heeding his blandishments.

"All right; I will."

There is little use in obtaining a promise from a perfectly untrustworthy person, but one occasionally does it, nevertheless.

"You promise?"

"I promise."

Madame Suzanne drew her chair a little nearer to her father's.

"Well," she said, "it's like this—"

VIII

"Just give me the bag of fertilizer, Ellen, will you? This lily is getting quite shabby. I wish it would rain."

The Professor, who was boldly flaunting himself in the sight of all men whose

houses happened to be higher than his on the roof in his shirt sleeves, took the bag Aunt Ellen held out to him and went back to his work.

It was very warm, and Aunt Ellen, who was seated in what her cousin insisted on calling the bower, though as yet it was a mere lattice work hut of unpainted pine laths, fanned herself lazily with a newspaper. "You are a truthful man, Barnabas," she sighed after a pause, during which the Professor, squatting on his heels, fed spoonfuls of patent fertilizer to his supposedly starving plants, "but I don't see how you can say it is cooler up here than in that nice, cool parlor."

"It isn't. Did I say it was? I hope I didn't. But there's more air, Ellen. The parlor is very nice, indeed, but as you conscientiously keep the windows and blinds shut all the time, you can't pretend that there is any air in it."

Rising as he spoke, the old man wiped his forehead with satisfaction and simplicity on his shirt sleeve.

"It's *cool*, Barnabas, down there, and for my part, I dare say I am an old goose, but I *don't* like sitting in a hen coop."

"A hen coop! You just wait, you ungrateful critter, until these creepers begin to—creep! Cool, green leaves and waving tendrils between you and the blue sky! Then I'll sit in the hen coop and you may asphyxiate in your beloved parlor!"

Mrs. Buck rose. That is, she apparently walked off on her knees, but in reality she had risen and picked her way over the warm tin roof to where the Professor stood.

"I love to be with you, Barnabas, and I am delighted that your—h'm—your roof garden and your bower give you so much pleasure. But I think I'll wait until creepers begin creeping and the green leaves growing before I come up again. In plain English, it is broiling hot up here, and my head feels as if it was going to burst."

"Dear me! Dear me!" The Professor stood looking at her, a spoonful of patent fertilizer in his hand, his spectacles clinging to his nose by faith,

as it appeared, his kind eyes full of sympathy.

"Poor old Ellen! My dear cousin, by all means go down and get cool. And when Jinny comes home, ask her to come up and have a look at things, will you?"

Aunt Ellen stumped away down the steep stairs and the old man went on with his work.

This magnificent idea of having a garden on his roof had been suggested to him by Bobby Lassels, and that youth had more than once come to "help" in the work. The Professor had labored enthusiastically, and Aunt Ellen's part had been to smile when pounds of black or sandy earth fell on the stair carpet or in the passage, and when a cactus, contributed by Bobby as peculiarly adapted to the New York summer climate, had clawed great strips out of the wall paper on the landing.

In time, however, the bower was completed, every nail driven in by the Professor himself, huge pots of clematis and wistaria cuttings ensconced at its base, and opposite the bower, bravely dying in the cause, had been placed many pots of geraniums, heliotrope, mignonette and other flowers, which were confidently expected by the Professor to wax and grow strong and fill the air with delicious fragrance.

Gardening, even roof gardening, is a soul satisfying mania, even when things show a petulant indifference to tender care and a wrong headed determination to die. The Professor, who for years had spent his evenings deep in the poesy of higher mathematics, now bolted his evening meal and rushed upstairs "to see how they looked," as if he were seventeen instead of seventy-three. The smell of wet earth was as incense to his enamored nostrils, and when he presented anyone with a flower plucked from one of his plants, he became as if he had unhooked the evening star.

He had worked hard all this particular day, doing something with figures which I am too unlearned even to attempt to put a name to; the paper, sum, thesis or poem, whichever it was—he

was very strong on the poesy of his beloved mathematics—had gone off registered, and the certificate, the paper which was to prove that it was registered, had been used to light a pipe he had smoked before coming up to enjoy the balmy fragrance of his flowers. So now, as he pottered about, humming to himself a tune which no one on earth but Jinny could have recognized to be Tosti's "Good-bye," the old man was as happy as kings are politely assumed to be and, without a doubt, are not.

The flowers hung their heads, ungrateful things, and looked several degrees droopier than they had the evening before, but to the Professor's enchanted eyes they were brave and flourishing. Jinny would soon be coming home from her party. Every social function that existed, except a funeral, was to the Professor a party, but this particular party was a *real* party, for it was the evening of Dino Peele's birthday, and at that very minute Madame Suzanne was toiling upstairs in that dingy house in the west thirties.

No doubt, too, Bobby would soon be coming. The Professor, as he treated a limp, highstrung-looking heliotrope to a douche calculated to give an athlete palpitation of the heart, smiled to himself. Bobby and Jinny would make a delightful young couple. They looked really quite splendid together. How Bobby's eyes glowed when he had asked the Professor under her very nose—the rascal—if Jinny might marry him! It did not occur to the old man to wonder whether Jinny would want to marry Bobby. Of course she would. And he, the Professor, would have to have a new coat for the wedding, and Ellen should have a silk dress. Perhaps, on the whole— The old man stood still for a moment, and then shaking his head, said decidedly: "Positively green at the seams!"

Bobby Lassels, who had been sitting for some time on the top step of the ladderlike stair watching his unconscious friend, burst out laughing.

"Who is 'green at the seams,' Professor? That is a very abusive remark?"

"How do you do? How do you do? I thought you'd be coming this evening. Come and look at my flowers. Aren't they lovely?"

"Lovely," assented Bobby with gravity and perfect sincerity, for would not Jinny soon be coming?

Miss Alice Giddings, a young lady of thirty-odd summers and a heart that, like evil deeds, continually came home to roost, was just then contemplating the evening from a neighboring window. When she saw Bobby, whom she mentally called "that blond swell," once more on the Professor's roof, she dragged her front hair out of its curl papers, combed it out and leaned pensively against the grimy window frame, her profile, which was considered good, turned to the "blond swell," but one eye, much strained, watching his every movement in a way nature had not intended in that position.

"Where is—Jinny?" Bobby asked presently, when he had admired the bower.

"She will soon be coming. She went to a children's party with her aunt—with Mrs. Inglis."

"Oh, yes, I know, at the Peeles'. Professor—do you think she will?"

The Professor, who had just discovered and pounced upon a venomous green worm on one of his mignonettes, squashed that creature with cold cruelty between two sticks and then got up. "I—hope so. Oh, yes, I am perfectly sure she will....

"Perfectly sure!" Oh, do tell me why you are sure? Has she said anything? I am so awfully afraid, now that I've come on purpose to ask her, that she won't. Why should she?" he added with gloom, looking straight through Miss Giddings's face without seeing it.

"Why *shouldn't* she?" returned the Professor. "I know I would, and so would Ellen."

Bobby gave a short giggle. "Would Mrs. Buck? Well, she sha'n't have the chance, so we'll never— Ah, here she comes! Isn't it queer?" he added in a nervous whisper. "I can only hear those steps squeaking, and yet I know it's she."

"Ellen?" asked the Professor, pouncing on another worm; and then, holding up his head, he listened, for Jinny was singing as she came upstairs.

"Sweetest little feller, everybody knows;
Do' know what to call him, but he's mighty
lak a rose,"

Jinny piped away, and as she came out into the evening air she was still singing. "Hello, Daddy! I've a present— Oh, Bobby, how do you do?"

She shook hands with the perturbed youth and then held out her present to the old man. It was an exquisite pink rose all a-growing and a-blown. "Aunt Margaret sent it to you, with her love."

"Where," cried the Professor wildly, "is that worm? I had him, and I've lost him—because you sang; and now he'll crawl away and get on my roses. Give it to me, my dear. What a beautiful rose! Bobby, have you seen that worm?"

"No, Professor, I swear that I have neither seen nor am I privy to that villainous creature's machinations. Oh, Jinny," the youth added, forgetting everything, the Professor, the worm and the rest of the world, "there is the moon!"

Jinny turned, and together they looked up at the pale golden disk in the rosy sky. Then Bobby's big hand closed quietly over the girl's little one, and he drew her away to the other side of the roof.

The Professor, after searching in vain for the worm, turned to speak to them, and behold, they had gone very far—so far that even he, with his old heart keeping time with theirs out of his perfect love and sympathy, could not follow.

He stood quite still for a moment watching them, and then, as he turned to creep quietly down the stairs, he found the worm executing a fancy dance on his sleeve. With the utmost delicacy he removed it, stared at it absently for a moment, and then, tenderly depositing it on a smooth green leaf of his new rose, turned again.

Bobby and Jinny stood close to-

gether, and Bobby no longer held the girl's hand because his arm was around her waist. They were not talking, and the silence about them seemed to the Professor to be both almost tangible and altogether sacred.

One of his feet was on the stair, when he caught sight of Miss Alice Giddings leaning out of her window, watching with breathless interest the two young figures beyond the bald bower.

For a moment the old man hesitated. Should he let them remain in blissful ignorance of their unsympathetic witness. Or should he motion violently to that witness to go away? Or should he tell Bobby that a woman was in a window?

At length he decided that what they did not know could not hurt them, and went softly down to his room, leaving them together, he himself utterly unconscious that in his sympathy he had set that iniquitous worm down to feast on his choicest plant.

IX

MANY years ago, when the writer of this might-have-been-veracious chronicle was very young, a certain curly-haired youth, coming home for vacation from St. Paul's School, used to be very "long" on Greek quotations done for her benefit into English.

Of these, one or part of one has stuck in my memory. Who said it I know not, nor how to spell the man's name, but in my mental ear it runs thus: "Um-slopagas, the homeliest man in all Hellas; he was peaked as to his head, and sparse woolly hair grew upon it."

This is all I know or ever knew of the person with the name I prefer not to attempt again, but in thinking of Mrs. Inglis's friend, Miss Brown, the description of the old Grecian comes back to me with peculiar force.

Miss Brown, had she lived in old days in Greece, would have shared the honors of superlative ugliness in that country. She, too, was peaked as to head, and sparse and woolly was her hair.

Whether Um—the Greek in question—had boiled gooseberry eyes, a

red, potato-shaped nose and a pale, wide mouth, I do not know, but Emma Brown had. She also had a very bad figure, being flat-waisted, round-shouldered and hipless. And her hands were large, flat, square-nailed and red.

Yet this woman's mother was a cousin to the famous beauty, Sally Fairchild, of Virginia, whose daughter, Sophy Cressage, someone suggested putting into the Litany under the heading of, "Good Lord, deliver us."

The ugly Miss Brown dwelt in a small, cheap flat, to and from which she went by the medium of an electric car. No one had ever been known to offer her the loan of a carriage, even on stormy days, and when she went to dinners, she went in a cab.

She wore all her clothes two years, and some of them even three. Her hats were made by a little woman in Sixth Avenue; her gloves had been known to smell of benzine, and there was a story that when Mrs. Washington-Jones had gone to call on "the poor thing," that plutocratic lady found the drawing-room windows open—it was in winter—and gloves of all kinds pinned to the lace curtains, being aired.

Miss Brown was, as has been said, a very silent woman; she never made conversation, though she occasionally, in pity for a nervous hostess, tried, and she had no accomplishments of which the world knew.

She neither sang nor sketched nor painted nor pasteled nor carved nor modeled nor burnt nor embroidered nor made lace nor danced nor rode nor recited nor acted nor stage-managed nor spoke other languages than New Yorkese. She was as poor as a rat, as ugly as sin, as old as Methuselah, as dull as ditch water, and yet—the woman had friends. Not acquaintances, but friends, and the reason was, after all, not so hard to find as it looked. She was good—just good.

Keats said, "Oh, what a charm has white simplicity!" and he might also have said, "Oh, what a charm has goodness!" Margaret Inglis, who had seen a good deal of the world, and who had no other friend in it, loved Emma

Brown and trusted her as if the elder woman had been her mother. Katherine Chase, before her hurried departure for South Dakota, had told all her hardy-to-be-told troubles to Miss Brown, and an hour later Jimmy arrived and told her his version of the story.

Pat Yelverton, two days after his arrival in New York after a certain memorable crossing by the southern route, had found his way to the little apartment and told its owners some things over which they had both shed tears; and Ned Peele, during his son's engagement to the girl he himself subsequently married, had come all the way from New York to the little place near Seabright where Miss Brown was living in a boarding house to ask her advice.

And the wonderful, incredible and most admirable part of it was that never, no matter how the tangles straightened themselves out, did any human being ever learn that Emma Brown had heard a word about them. The heaven born gift of holding her tongue was hers. And not only could she hold her tongue, but she never looked wise or knowing; no movement of vanity ever prompted her to raise her eyebrows—such as they were, poor dear—or shrug her shoulders at the wrong moment, for if she had but little eyebrow, she had no vanity whatsoever.

The afternoon after Madame Suzanne's interview with her respectable parent, Miss Brown was sitting by her window, sewing a button on one of her second best boots. The room was very small, an upright piano looking quite huge in it, and bookcases all the way around the walls making it even smaller than it need have been. On the table a bunch of striped yellow carnations flaunted innocently in a little old-fashioned jug, and on the piano stood a slim cut glass vase containing one exquisite rose.

Miss Brown was facing the piano, and as she sewed, gave first a glance at the rose and one at the button and the boot, and then one at a book that lay open on her knee.

The book was poor George Gissing's last and best work, "Henry Ryecroft."

Miss Brown was much interested in the book and the rose, and a little, it is to be supposed, in the boot, so much so that she did not hear the bell ring, and looked up in great surprise when, a moment later, Mrs. Inglis stood before her.

"You! Glad to see you. Have you read 'Henry Ryecroft'? No? Well, you must. Or rather," she went on, biting her thread with a blameworthy disregard of her teeth, "you mustn't. It's no book for you."

Margaret smiled and threw open her jacket. "All right; I won't read it," she said. "Emma—Bobby and Jinny are engaged."

Miss Brown put on her boot and buttoned it with a hairpin. "Are they?" she cried. "The dears!"

"Yes."

"And what has Mother Lassels had to say?"

Margaret laughed. "Oh, she has been very gracious. She lunched with us today and gave Jinny a little brooch and was very—human."

The boot was buttoned and Miss Brown sat up again.

"I do love Stuyvesant Harding," she observed with apparent irrelevance.

"How do you know he had anything to do with it?"

"I know several things, my dear, not being blind or deaf. Well, I am very glad. Margaret, have you told Bobby about that old blackguard Sweet?"

Mrs. Inglis shook her head. "Told him! I haven't laid eyes on him except at luncheon, and after it he walked home with Jinny. He is wildly in love with her."

"The nicest boy in New York," remarked the older woman—"without exception. And you know what I think about Jinny."

Mrs. Inglis nodded, and rising, went to the window.

"Emma," she said, gazing at the enlivening prospect of telegraph wires and sparrows, "Emma—"

Then she broke down and cried, her small gloved hands pressed to her face.

Miss Brown sat quite still in her place until the paroxysm of crying was over, and then she said gently: "What is it—Stuyve?"

"Yes. He—is going. Really, this time. He told us all at luncheon. And I know what he means, now that Bobby and Jinny are engaged, Bobby can manage Sweet. How—how can I stand it, Emma?"

She was such a beautiful woman that tears made her only the more lovely, than which it would be hard to say more. Miss Brown, uglier than ever by comparison, held out her hand, and the younger woman sat down on the stool at her feet and leaned against her.

"He was going, you know, and then Sweet came and—I forgot, and telephoned for him—"

"I know; you told me. I suppose," she went on reflectively, "he has got to the end of his rope." Neither of them smiled at the homely phrase.

"Yes. He said—that night, before the dinner—that he could stand no more. What *must* he think of me?" Margaret pulled off her gloves, spotted and damp inside with tears, and threw them down impatiently. "He must think me a monster, an absolute brute."

"He thinks you—an angel, dear."

"I don't see why. He can't know that I care one straw, and he *knows* I know about him, and yet I have let him do everything for me, give me his time, his thought— It serves me perfectly right, Emma, that he is tired of it all and is going," she went on, her beautiful mouth quivering. "But I don't see how I can bear it."

Miss Brown rubbed her nose, that hardly deserved to go by the same name as the exquisitely chiseled one so near it.

"You have borne a good deal, first and last," she said quietly, "and God will give you strength for this."

There was a short pause, and at the end of it the bell rang. Mrs. Inglis sprang to her feet. "Oh—don't let anyone in Emma!" she cried. "I've howled myself to a jelly."

Miss Brown led her into the next room. "It's Mr. Harding," she said.

"I have an engagement with him, and—didn't realize how late it was. When he has come into the other room you can escape. Good-bye, dear. Do you want me tonight?"

Mrs. Inglis shook her head as she helped herself to a thick brown veil from her friend's drawer. "No thanks; I'll have to fight it out alone. I'll telephone you tomorrow."

The little maid coming in just then to announce Harding, watched the affectionate adieu of the two women with, in spite of her real love for her kind mistress, something like wonder in her heart. Mrs. Inglis was so beautiful and so rich. A moment later Harding was shaking hands with Miss Brown.

"Awfully good of you to see me," he began at once. "I've nothing really to say—just the same old story."

He looked pale and old as she turned up the electric light.

"I hear you're off somewhere or other," she answered, sitting down.

"Yes. I'm going to do a little mild mountaineering in the Andes with an English friend. Do you approve?"

"Yes."

"Glad of that, for I do, too. I hate it like—the devil, but I approve it strongly. Miss Brown, play to me!"

Now there was in one corner of this room a divan, which was very broad and springy and comfortable. And on this divan, as if it were an old habit, Stuyvesant Harding lay down when Miss Brown had switched off the light and seated herself at the piano.

The apartment was at the very top of a very high building, and little noise ever rose to it from the street. Now, at that hour, a quiet seemed to brood on it that might have come from the apparently not far distant sky; the little room was filled with a beautiful silence that leaped against the man's tired nerves as do little waves on the shore. And then Emma Brown began to play.

First she played several old Scotch ballads, softly and simply, but with a witchery of harmony, a perfection of feeling all her own; then some old love songs—"Promise Me," Tosti's "Good-bye," then a hymn or two—"Lead

Kindly Light," one of Whiting's elflike waltzes, and Tschaikowsky's "Chanson Triste." She, played softly, dreamily, without ever stopping, modulating from one into the next, keeping on and on and on, as if she were playing entirely for her own pleasure, without a thought of her hearer, and as if she never meant to stop.

When at length after nearly an hour of music she rose, Harding, soothed by the feeling of being alone, and rested by the continuous music, had dropped asleep.

Miss Brown sat quite still in the darkness, her big hands folded, her head resting against her chair, waiting for him to awaken. At last he did so, stirring uneasily, groaning, and then at length springing up with an apologetic laugh.

"I am ashamed," he said, turning on the light, "but I am rested."

It was evidently not the first time that the same thing had happened, for they nodded understandingly at each other as he smoothed his ruffled hair.

"You approve of my going, then?" he asked, after a pause.

"Oh, dear, yes. I was always for it, you know."

"Well—I was against it, but now I see it must be. I am about done up. You will write me, Miss Brown?"

"I will."

"And—you will tell me *little* things about her, the kind of things a man gets—desperate to hear?"

She nodded. "I will."

"Bobby Lassels will, of course, look out for her now, as far as that villain Sweet is concerned, and—even if I were here, there would be no use in going to see Roger. "So—" He paused. "Good-bye, Miss Brown. Thank you for everything." Raising her hand to his lips, he kissed it. "We are off day after tomorrow," he said, "and—tomorrow afternoon I shall go to say good-bye to her at about three. Would you mind being there?"

"Not at all. Good-bye."

When he had gone she went into her little dining room and ate her little dinner. It was a curious fact that

neither Mrs. Inglis nor Harding suspected her of being the confidante of the other, but it did not strike her that it was curious.

X

As a race, we certainly love shows. We love flower shows, horse shows, dog shows, and after mature reflection I have come to the conclusion that in the long run it is more the show than the flower, horse or dog that we love—the feminine part of us, I mean.

Of course, there are exceptions to this rule. No social rule is hard and fast in America, and some of our women are as horsey, as doggy or as flowery as any in England or on the Continent. At this very moment I could name a hunting woman who, a well known member of a great English hunt once told me, rides with as much daring and more grace than any islander of them all. Even the Czar is supposed to respect one well known woman's opinion on Russian greyhounds; and do we not all adore flowers in boxes, with a small damp card somewhere among the stems?

But as a rule, when American women go to shows, they go as an integral part of it, and thus attire themselves in purple and fine linen, and contrive, as they sit in their boxes or their chairs, to look, as hundreds of eyes are turned on them by the circulating *hoi-polloi*, so exquisitely pretty and so sweetly unconscious as to awaken admiration and despair in the stranger within the gates.

"Horses? Splendid, my dear fellow. I say, look at that woman with a red wing in her hat! That's Mrs. Archie Bannerman; isn't she a wonder?"

"Oh, yes, very decent bow-wows—but have you seen the Lucas twins?"

"Flowers? There's Betty Bowyer in a white lace gown."

This was the *hoi-polloi*, for lives there the American outsider so unenterprising as to acknowledge even by a prefix that he knoweth not the pride of the nation by their Christian names?

Now, it happened that the evening of Harding's visit to Miss Brown a great

show was held in Madison Square Garden. No matter what kind of show, whether of horses, dogs, flowers or of automobiles, the real show, dressed as no other so numerous gathering of women on earth could be dressed, sat in the boxes and was adored by the people as occurs in no other country in the world. Socialists may rant, certain classes of fresh imported foreigners talk and shake their locks; but in his heart your real American lower class loves at least the women of its upper class—not as a possible help in hungry times, not in feudal submission, but with a curious, not altogether laughable, almost brotherly pride.

If Mrs. Saunders is young, gracious, and altogether lovely, is not her compatriot, Billy Briggs, to enjoy the feeling that there is nothing quite like her in other countries?

And so Billy Briggs chews his tobacco or smokes his evil smelling cigar, cocks his hat over one ear and feels himself a pretty fine fellow—as he is.

“Say, muddam”—an almost profane accent on the last syllable—“do show me Bijou Mott.”

The thin, piping child’s voice came from a girl of about sixteen who, a crutch under one arm, her other hand clutched tightly around Madame Suzanne’s wrist, stood close to the barrier beyond which the ostensible show is either barking or fading in the heat.

“I haven’t seen ‘im yet, Mamie,” returned the manicure gently. “That’s Mrs. Tinker up there in purple.”

“Ruby Tinker?”

“Yes. She’s pretty, isn’t she?”

The lame girl studied the sweet, unconscious face in question, and then said, with a quaint air of disappointment: “No, I don’t think so, not really. Her nose is too long, muddam.”

“The gentleman with her is the French Ambassador, Mamie.”

“Gosh!” said Mamie. She was the daughter of Madame Suzanne’s boardinghouse keeper, and the manicure, who, like most people, was perfectly capable of an occasional good-natured act, had brought her to the show that evening to point out to her some of the

swells about whom it was her greatest delight to read in the papers.

“There, that’s Algy Astorbilt,” cried the young girl presently, with much satisfaction. “Isn’t his *mus-tache* too sweet? I seen his picture in the *World* a while ago. Do show me Mrs. Fox, if she’s here, and oh, *don’t* you think Bijou Mott ‘ll come?”

“Yes, I suppose he will; it’s early yet. Oh, there’s his wife, in black, in the box with the two girls dressed exactly alike. They are the Lucas twins. Mrs. Mott is very pretty, and uses the best perfume in New York. Gets it straight from Japan, from a man who used to be attached to the Ambass—Embassy.”

Mamie Masters admired Mrs. Mott, and to do the poor girl justice, her heart was absolutely free from envy; all she wanted was to have the wonderful creatures whose doings constituted her almost entire mental pabulum come up to her preconceived ideas of them. On they went, the manicure and the cripple, round the great circle, rubbing shoulders with all kinds of people, paying not the slightest heed to the exhibition to their left, devoting all their attention to that above them on their right.

It was a warm evening, and the air was not good; Mamie Masters’s thin face, with its curious, elflike chin, grew paler. Madame Suzanne was flushed, and yet they stayed on.

Mrs. Fox—the great Mrs. Fox—had come in, laughing loudly with some friends, and wriggling her bare white shoulders out of her flesh-colored gown. “Batears” Harvey had come with his bride-elect and her mother; the Carrs, the Leonards, the Lagranges, they had all come. And Dan Sweet had come.

Not pleasant-looking was Dan, nor smart, nor clean, though he had, in honor of the occasion, put on that suit of clothes which he was wont to wear when he went to meet his daughter in the house in the west thirties, and though there was—oh, profanation—a rose in his coat!

Sauntering through the crowd, he passed his daughter without a sign of

recognition, and she saw him go his way without glancing at the box in which sat, as guests, Mrs. Inglis and Jinny.

It was his object to be as inconspicuous as possible, though for certain reasons of his own he had thought it well to come tonight.

Mrs. Inglis and Jinny were in Mrs. Fred Lomax's box, surrounded by men. Mrs. Lomax, who had just returned from London, called away in the height of her third and most successful season by the visit to her daughter, Mrs. Billy Schwarz, of a certain long-legged bird, as "Our Village" hath it, was a handsome woman, wearing her hair in a low friz over the eyebrows, and looking several years younger than she could possibly be.

She liked having Margaret Inglis and Jinny with her, for they attracted exactly the right men to the box, and something of the *éclat* of the young girl's engagement seemed to accrue to her through its having been announced two hours before at her house.

Jinny in a white frock, Bobby close behind her, his ring, a splendid ruby, on her finger, was very happy, and looked as charmingly sweet and fresh as the rose in her hair.

She was seen now in the same surroundings and wearing the same kind of clothes, very like Margaret Inglis, and old Mr. Carey, who was supposed to have the most prophetic eye for beauty in all America, had declared that in five years she would be the most beautiful woman in the country. "By that time," this modern wise man had added, "Margaret Inglis will be *passée*, and Sophy Cressage most probably an English duchess or marchioness."

But in the meantime this too thin, immature little Jinny was to one or two people already the loveliest as well as the best creature in the world.

"Jinny," said Bobby in her ear, "are you *quite* sure you really love me?"

"Why, Bobby?"

"Well—it doesn't seem possible. You are such an angel, and I'm such a—such an ordinary big duffer—"

As he spoke Stuyvesant Harding en-

tered the box, and the man who had been there the longest rose and took his leave.

Mrs. Lomax shook hands cordially with the newcomer.

"I hear dreadful things about you, Stuyve," she said gaily as he sat down. "Is it true that you are going to the South Pole?"

"Not quite—but approximately so; I am going away."

"Isn't it abominable of him?" Mrs. Inglis asked carelessly, bowing to someone in the crowd below.

"Horrid. Why do you let him, Margaret?"

"I let him! My dear Cissy, if I begged him on my knees he wouldn't stay; would you, Stuyve?"

She smiled as she spoke, but her beautiful face grew quite expressionless, as some women's faces do under stress of strongly repressed emotion.

Harding smiled. "I'm afraid even that couldn't stop me," he returned, his eyes sweeping her face and then returning to Mrs. Lomax's. "It's a thing I've been meaning for years to do, and this seems an excellent chance. How is Fred, Cissy?"

"Fred is perfectly wretched. It's his liver now. Last summer, you know, it was his nerves, and in the autumn he rather turned his attention to Bright's disease, but now he's quite settled that his liver is all wrong. It's such a comfort to him, poor dear."

She spoke with what some Americans still call an English accent, and it was a carefully acquired, painstakingly developed one, warranted to need renewal only once every two years.

"He looks well," remarked one of the other men present. "I saw him yesterday on Riverside Drive."

"Oh, yes, motoring. By the way, Mr. Keene, have you seen Bijou Mott's new Mercedes?"

"I have," interposed a little Italian hastily. "It is a beauty." The talk now went on with eager interest, centered in those most unlovely horseless hobbies, and Harding was for a moment free to study Margaret unobserved.

She wore, as she often did in the even-

ing, black, and out of it her exquisite shoulders and face rose like a white flower. She wore no jewels except a square emerald engraved in Persian characters that hung around her neck on an aluminum chain. She had never been more beautiful. Suddenly, as the talk went on with increased excitement, she turned and met Harding's eyes. He knew that she must have known for years that he loved her, but he had never told her that he did, and she had never seemed to acknowledge the unspoken fact. Now, as they looked at each other, her eyes told him that which he had never dreamed of, that for which he had never allowed himself to hope.

The active part had until then always been his, the passive hers, and in making his plans to go away it had simply not occurred to him as even a remote possibility that she could take any active step either for or against that end. Strong-willed people frequently make the mistake of not admitting in their own minds the possibility of anyone else acting in the matter of which they themselves are thinking. Tacitly they allot to all others a quite passive role, and thus are sometimes much surprised by a decisive act upsetting their own projects on someone else's part.

And this was what had happened now, when Margaret Inglis looked up and said to Stuyvesant Harding with her eyes: "I love you; how can you leave me?"

Harding caught his breath, and in spite of himself closed his eyes for a moment, for the brilliant scene before him was whirling like the scraps of glass in a kaleidoscope.

"All the way to the Land's End and back in six days," Mrs. Lomax was saying. "Rotten roads, too, most of 'em. *That* shows what a machine is good for, doesn't it?"

Someone down below was giving someone else a prize for something. The band burst into "The Stars and Stripes Forever," and everyone clapped.

"Don't look at me like that," Harding said, with perfect safety in the clamor, "unless you mean it."

"I do mean it," she returned quietly.

"—perfect for the first thirty miles, and then the beastly thing broke down utterly," Keene was shouting—"broke down utterly!" Everyone laughed as the music brayed, and Margaret Inglis, with a faint smile, caught up the phrase.

"That's what *I've* done," she said to Harding: "Went perfectly for—ten years, and then—broke down utterly!"

The music stopped with a bang, and the circulating crowd below was again free to turn its attention to the real object of its coming, the show in the boxes.

At some distance from Mrs. Lomax's box, Madame Suzanne and Mamie Masters had come to a standstill, and the lame girl was gazing rapturously at the latest comers whom the manicure was pointing out to her.

"That's Mrs. Billy Westmacote, the English beauty, in L. R. Barclay's box. And that's Bijou Mott behind her, the one laughing so hard. The old man in the next box to the left is Anton Roth, the sugar man. Oh, look quick! The tall girl just sitting down—there in pink, you see—with the green leaves in her hair? That's Sophy Cressage, who was engaged to the Duke de Jory, the Frenchman who gave Nini Toulouse the ruby belt—you remember?"

Mamie sighed. She was nearly dead with fatigue; her back ached and her head throbbed, but she was having what she called a splendid time.

"Oh, it's perfectly lovely, muddam," she said gratefully, "and you are so good to take so much trouble for a girl."

Madame Suzanne laughed. "Oh, I can take a good deal of trouble," she returned, looking off to the left, where Bobby and Jinny were talking together in obvious disregard of the rest of the world, "for *some* girls!"

XI

THE next day it rained. Having snowed within the last week, and the sun having shone with the genial warmth of June, it now behooved the little jeering climate imp to send, just

to show that he could, a long gray day of rain that was at first neither warm nor chill, not having as yet made up his mind whether to wind up with a tropic evening or a good old-fashioned blizzard.

Margaret Inglis was at home all day. Madame Suzanne arrived at eleven, as usual on Thursdays, alert and trim in her smart jacket and little toque. Margaret, who had not slept, and whose thoughts, going round and round like a squirrel in a cage, had come to no end, was glad to have even the light distraction of the manicure's visit, and, quite contrary to her wont, rather encouraged the woman to talk.

"Miss Lassels's nails look very well, indeed," she said, dipping her fingers into the soapy water presented to her. "I noticed them last night."

Madame Suzanne smiled. "Ah, yes? Miss Lassels is a very charming young lady. I am glad that she is so happy; she showed me her ring yesterday when I was there."

"Yes, they are very happy. Can you see, or would you like to turn on the light? It is a gloomy day."

"*Mais non*, madame; I see perfectly well."

Madame Suzanne had made her plans, and meant to follow them out step by step. An impulsive woman, she had taught herself never to act on impulse, and such women have a great advantage over others. It would not do to have Jinny, after a certain event on the coming to pass of which the manicure counted with much satisfaction, confide to her aunt or to anyone else the fact that the manicure had formerly known her mother. It was to be regretted that that statement had been made, but its making, of course, antedated the making of the great plan, and could not now be helped, so all that could be done was to render it innocuous.

"Madame Inglis," the woman began, with marked hesitation, "there is something I should like to tell you, if I might."

"Certainly," agreed Margaret, somewhat surprised.

"It is—about my own affairs."

"Tell me by all means if you like, Madame Suzanne."

"*Merci*, madame. It is this. Years ago, I—I knew Miss Lassels's mother; we worked together at Madame Pinson's."

"You knew my brother's wife?"

"Yes. And—of course I knew of the marriage. Jinny never told her father. I believe—he was not—very—very nice—but she wrote me. And so, when you mentioned Miss Lassels's name to me that day, I knew why—why I 'ad been wondering whom she looked like."

It was perfectly plausible, and it never occurred to Margaret to doubt the story. The woman had been in her employ and in that of her friends for years; she lived, as everyone knew, in a perfectly respectable boarding house in Twentieth Street, and appeared to be a hard working, self-respecting person.

"Did you tell my niece this?" Margaret asked, after a pause.

"Yes, madame. That was why I ventured to trouble madame. I—could not 'elp it; it—came out. And then I realized that I should perhaps not have done it—that it might be disagreeable to you, madame."

On she went, with her faultless French inflection, picked up from her husband and perfected by a five years' residence in Paris. She told Jinny's questions, her curiosity, her pleading to hear more of her unremembered mother. And then she told of her own refusal to tell more.

"It is my bread an' butter, madame," she finished—"my discretion; and it was not for me to tell. But yesterday again she begged me to tell her, and to show her the photograph of her mother that I told her I 'ave—and so I decided, madame, as you 'ave always been very kind to me, to tell you about it and ask your permission."

Mrs. Inglis was silent for a moment. "I quite understand," she said at length, "and I do not blame you at all. If I were you, I should go to Professor Thoyt and give him the photograph and—the letters, did you say? She lives with him, you know; he is her god-father."

Madame Suzanne's thanks were very cleverly expressed. She understood that it would be best for her, personally, *not* to talk to the girl about her mother, and her voice showed that she was a little hurt, even while her reason approved Mrs. Inglis's ultimatum.

This was the impression that she conveyed to Margaret, and with it the subject dropped.

The manicure was perfectly satisfied with the result of her move. Her father, rough as he was, could be trusted to do his part without blundering, and the third person, whose being taken into the plot obviated the necessity of either the father or the daughter showing at all, had been chosen with great care.

Madame Suzanne's own alibi had been suggested by Mrs. Inglis herself; and Sweet, whose connection with the *soi-disant* Frenchwoman might almost be said to be known to no one, had made certain preparations as to the disposal of his own time that could be trusted to allay any possible suspicion.

Suddenly Margaret looked up. "Her father—my brother's wife's father—is named Sweet, isn't it?" she asked.

"Yes. Dan Sweet."

"He—is still alive."

The manicure hesitated, her handsome eyes fixed on Mrs. Inglis. "Madame Inglees," she said slowly, "I used to know him, old Sweet, and he was—not nice. But not at all! I think, if I may suggest, that it would be only a grief to Miss Lassels to 'ear about him. I thought I would not mention him to her."

"Have you seen him of late?" asked Margaret absently.

The other woman shrugged her shoulders. "No, madame, it is many years. I have worked, and 'ave now a better position. He may be dead, but if he is still alive—I should not wish to see him. 'E was a bad man; Jinny could not live with 'im."

Mrs. Inglis had believed every word, and as the bad Mr. Sweet's daughter left the house it was with a curious feeling of pity for one so simple. Clever lying is a rare accomplishment, and he who attains it often experiences this senti-

ment of mild scorn for the truthful people he befools.

When she was alone Margaret walked about her rooms, her hands clasped, a frown on her brow. It was not of Jinny that she was thinking. Her mind had gone back with a rebound to the memory of that wordless dialogue last night between her and Stuyvesant Harding. "He knows now—he knows now," she told herself with weary iteration. "What will he say when he comes?"

For he had said with words at the last, as he put her and Jinny into the carriage, that he would come. "Tomorrow at two," he had said, and now—it was nearly one.

Ringing, she dressed and went down to her solitary luncheon. The horrors of absolute solitude had, somehow, never before so thoroughly forced themselves on her as today.

The great dark room with its beautiful old furniture and tapestry hung walls seemed for the first time a prison, out of which she must burst her way.

The blond Oscar and his Irish satellite were jailers, the well chosen, well cooked food before her, prison fare. She wondered why all these things had never occurred to her before. And then, when James brought her Harding's card, she suddenly knew why. It was because she had told Stuyve that she loved him. His not knowing had been a sort of protection to her against herself, but now that protection was gone, and realization rushed on her.

As she left the room and went across the hall she trembled so that she could hardly stand. The door was still closed; when it had opened, what would happen? She was sailing into a perfectly unknown sea.

Then Oscar had opened the door and closed it behind her, and she stood leaning against it, looking down the length of the beautiful, homelike room.

"Margaret!"

"Yes—Stuyve?" He came within a few feet of her and stood still.

"Did you mean—what you said last night?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Since—when?"

"Always."

They both spoke very low, as if short of breath, and when she had answered him there was a long pause.

The clock, striking a quarter to three, seemed to have a new tone; the very furniture looked strange to her, and she noticed that there was more blue in the long rug than she had thought.

Then suddenly, without a word, he took a step forward, and kneeling at her feet, buried his face in the edge of her gown.

Looking down, she saw how gray he had grown of late.

"Don't—please," she whispered.

Then he looked up, and she saw that his face was wet and quivering. "Stuyve—don't; I can't bear it!"

She held out her hands. He rose and took them, and she led him to a little sofa, where they sat down.

"Stuyve—how unhappy you must have been!" she said, stroking his hand gently. "I—never realized."

"And now you do?"

"Ah, yes—now."

Curiously, or naturally enough, she was at that moment the stronger of the two. A constant struggle of any kind wears on the nerves, and Harding's struggle had been going on for thirteen years. Without a doubt, he would not, had he ever guessed that she loved him, too, have been able to do as he had done, but the statuelike quality of her face, added to her strength of will and sense of duty, had prevented his even dreaming of such a contingency. He knew that she had been very much in love with her husband when she married him, and knowing himself to have been incapable of more than one love, it had not occurred to him that she was other than himself. He had not reflected that she had been just nineteen on her wedding day, and that Roger Inglis was a man no woman could both know and love.

And now he knew that she loved him. What wonder that he could not speak, but sat with his head on his hands, trying to realize what had happened!

"Always," she had said. That

meant that she had loved him all those years—the evening when she had been so splendidly beautiful at that costume ball, when he had gone home early, unable to bear watching her; the evening at the Opera, when Roger had made his first public appearance so drunk that he had to be carried out of the box; at the Berenger wedding; the three times they had gone together to that "private sanatorium" to see Roger; the day he had met her in a snowstorm, her fur coat almost white, her cheeks like roses; those mornings when they had talked over her business matters and she had been so bored; on all these occasions when he had left her and gone his way, aching with the thought that she did not care a hang how he suffered, that she did not care a pin for him—on all these occasions she had loved him!

The wonder of it, in retrospect, had kept him awake all night, and made him tongue-tied, half afraid to speak even now.

"I didn't mean to let you know," she said at last.

"Thank God you did!" Then they were silent again for a time, at the end of which he said: "I go tomorrow."

Now, it has been observed that in matters of love the man and the woman are like the little wooden people in a Swiss barometer. If the man swings out toward daring and risk, the woman retires into timidity and prudence—and *vice versa*. Margaret Inglis had all night trembled with fear at the thought of his possibly refusing to leave New York now that she had told him her secret. He might even want her to divorce that poor creature sitting on the floor with his bottles, and that she would rather die than do. She had armed herself with all sorts of arguments, reasons why he should and must go, reasons why they must not meet for years.

And now at his unexpected ultimatum, "I go tomorrow," out she flew, like the little wooden woman in the barometer, toward the opposite viewpoint.

"No, no!" she cried. "You mustn't go! I—I won't let you go!"

For answer he caught her and kissed her—and he had been longing to kiss her for thirteen years. Then as he paused, and she drew away from him, the door opened and Miss Brown came in.

XII

JINNY was very busy that rainy day, for it was the day chosen by Aunt Ellen for the storing away in the old trunks in the attic, just under that wonderful bower of the Professor's, the winter clothes of the little household. This was a ceremonial of some importance, for clothes to be thus stored must be first brushed and aired and mended, and then little paper bags are to be filled with naphthaline and camphor and red pepper to be laid among the garments.

Some of Aunt Ellen's friends were in favor of naphthaline, some of camphor, and some of red pepper; and it was the Professor himself who many years before had made up his bewildered relative's mind for her by suggesting a combination of the three articles, which had been used ever since with, if but varying success against the ravages of those insatiable creatures, moths, at least a comfortable conviction in Aunt Ellen's mind that if it wouldn't keep 'em out, nothing on earth would.

Early in the morning before the rain had settled down, Hannah, the negro cook, had carried great heaps of clothes into the tiny backyard and beaten them well.

"Yas'm," Hannah told her mistress at breakfast, "they's no dust in *them* cloes any moah! The Perfessah's pockets was jes' lined with crumbs, like they alwas is, but they ain't any moah!"

The Professor, who enjoyed carrying small cakes or bits of chocolate in his pockets for the exigencies of his daily walk, laughed at the cook's remark, and Jinny followed suit.

"Doddy, you are a *dreadful* old gentleman!" said the girl, who was consuming what looked like a deadly number of hot scones. "I believe it was *you* who poisoned the swans in the Park last summer!"

Aunt Ellen, looking quite as big as anyone else seated at the table, went on with her directions to the cook. Every morning since Jinny could remember, old Hannah had come into the dining room during breakfast and settled the menu for the rest of the day with her mistress.

Jinny will remember to the last day of her life that they were to have broiled chickens that evening for dinner—broiled chickens and green peas and "blank mange," as Hannah called it. For nearly a week the young girl had been dining out somewhere every evening, but this time she was to eat her dinner at home, and Bobby was coming.

"Doddy, I'm going to hide your hat," she said, as they left the table, and she tied a big blue apron around her waist, preparatory to the work in the attic. "It's raining cats and dogs, and I'm afraid you'll forget and go out."

"Very well, my dear," returned the old man, "that might be a good plan. This rain will be excellent for my plants."

Mrs. Buck laughed. "And for the bower, Barnabas! Well, Jinny, let's get to work."

The three women went upstairs, and the Professor settled himself in his shabby study for a long morning's labor. He was on the point of a very important discovery, and the sight of his paper and inky old cork penholder was beautiful to him.

It was nine o'clock when he began to work, and when he was startled a moment later by a loud peal at the bell, it was a quarter to twelve.

"Dear me! How time does fly!" he said aloud.

After a pause the bell rang again, and he remembered that the cook, who was up in the attic, was out of earshot. So the old man trotted down the narrow hall and opened the door himself. A tall woman with a dark veil thrown back from her face stood before him.

"Professor T'oyt?" she asked, stumbling a little over the name.

"Yes, madame."

"Ah, then perhaps I may enter? I

come by the advice of Madame Inglees."

The Professor shook her wet umbrella on the oilcloth in the vestibule, and after helping her to remove her raincoat, led the way into his room.

"I am Madame Suzanne Pare," she began, sitting down and folding her hands—"a manicure by profession. I was here yesterday to do the nails of Miss Lassels."

"Ah, yes," said the Professor. "And very nice they looked, too—quite like Mrs. Inglis's. Perhaps you wish to see her now?"

Oh, no; Madame Pare had no wish to see Miss Lassels just then. It was about Miss Lassels that she had come, but she wished first to consult a little with Professor T'oyt, if he would be so good. It was, as she had said, Mrs. Inglis who had advised the visit.

The Professor listened with grave courtesy and was told many things. He was told of the days in Madame Mimi Pinson's hat shop, of the friendship between Susy Dean and poor Jinny Sweet; he was told of the iniquities of Dan Sweet—who Madame Suzanne piously hoped had reformed, if he had not been removed to another world—of the little lodging of the girl friends, when poor Jinny had no longer been able to stand living with her father, of Jinny's chance meeting with George Lassels, and the subsequent marriage, of one or two letters sent later to the friend—many, many things were told him.

And then, looking up in all innocence, he almost upset his informant's equanimity by asking quietly: "Whatever became of Sue?"

"Of—of Sue!" stammered the woman, losing some of her color.

"Yes. Jinny's sister. Sweet spoke to me of her—"

"Ah, yes; she died. She caught cold one night coming home from Tony Pastor's, where she had an engagement, and went off with quick consumption."

The Professor nodded, and after another half-hour's talk Madame Suzanne rose to go.

The work upstairs, in the meantime, had gone well, and Hannah had started

downstairs to prepare luncheon. Aunt Ellen was still busy tucking smelly little packets around the edges of the things in the trunks, and Jinny stood in an open window sneezing as if she never could stop. Hannah lumbered downstairs, and as she reached the ground floor heard a ring and went on to the door.

"Well, I declare! You gettin' proud, ain't you?" she exclaimed, shaking hands with another elderly African.

"Proud! What you ben doin', Hannah Jones, not to hear me? I been a-ringing at that there doah for hours, so I thought I'd try *this* one!"

"Come on in; I'm right glad to see you, anyhow. We've been packin' away our winter things in the attic."

The friends went leisurely down the passage to the stairs that led to Hannah's own kingdom, and as they turned, their dark faces indistinguishable in the darkness, the Professor ushered his guest out into the hall.

The Professor was a little absent-minded at luncheon, but no one took heed of that. It was taken for granted by both the women that he was engrossed in one of the uncanny mathematical problems in which he sometimes seemed tangled like a fly in a web, but out of which he always found his triumphant way. They finished their simple meal still deep in talk of skirts and cloaks and moths, and after it, separated, each going to her own room.

As Jinny started upstairs, the Professor called her.

"What are you going to do this afternoon, dear?" he said.

"I'm going to study now, Doddy, and then later I shall go and see how Aunt Margaret is."

"Can you be at home at six?"

"Yes, of course I can. Why?" She paused, one foot on the stairs, her lovely young face turned to him over her shoulder.

"I'll not tell you now, dearie. It's—it's a little surprise for you. Someone's coming whom—you will be glad to see."

"Why, Doddy, what *can* it be?"

The old man laughed. "I can't tell

you now; I promised not to—it's not my secret. At six, then."

Two hours later Jinny came quietly downstairs wearing a dark mackintosh and a small felt hat and carrying an umbrella. Without going to either Mrs. Buck's or the Professor's room, she opened the house door and went out into the gently pouring rain.

Old Hannah, who had brought to her the note just left for her by a poor boy, was the last person to see her.

The young girl walked over to Broadway, took a downtown car, and some time afterward alighted, and stepping daintily through the mud, made her way eastward.

The shops grew smaller, the farther she went, the pavement rougher, the passers-by more unpleasant-looking. Once or twice the young girl went into a shop to ask her way, for the way was far, and she grew vaguely uneasy.

Several Chinamen hurried past her. The evening shadows seemed in that narrow street to be closing in earlier than they need have; a drunken woman called after her and some boys laughed. With instinctive caution Jinny looked at her watch as inconspicuously as possible. It was five o'clock. Then at last she came to the street for which she was looking, and her courage rose. It could not be far now, and she would ask Madame Suzanne to go back part of the way with her.

She passed a saloon, a ragpicker's shop, a blank wall on which moldy strips of old theater bills hung dejectedly, and then she stopped. That was the number—62.

Number 62 was a very unattractive-looking house, with a black staircase leading up into heaven knew what fearful darkness; but Jinny was naturally courageous, and then she knew what a very respectable person Madame Suzanne was.

Taking the letter from her pocket, she read it again. It was typewritten and very short:

If Miss Jinny Lassels wants to hear about her mother and see her mother's picture, will she come alone this afternoon to No. 62 East Rogers Street? Up three flights, then

back. A ribbon will be hanging on the door-knob.

It was foolish of Madame Suzanne, but Jinny had tried to hear about her mother in her own way and had failed, and no doubt Madame Suzanne really believed all this mystery to be necessary. And Jinny was a goose to be afraid of a dark staircase, and if she did not hurry she would not be back in time for Doddy's surprise!

XIII

At half past seven Mrs. Inglis and Miss Brown shook out their napkins and took up their soup spoons in the dignified dining room of Mrs. Inglis's house.

Oscar and James, swift and quiet-footed as ever, did their work in the usual manner, removing plates, providing other ones, handing all sorts of good things one after the other to the two women, pouring wine into the delicate glasses, noiseless, skillful, conventional. The meal was like a thousand others that they had served to their mistress and this unattractive friend of hers, except for the detail that neither of the two women ate anything at all.

They sat in almost unbroken silence opposite each other, Miss Brown in her gray street dress, Mrs. Inglis in a black *demi-toilette*. Margaret had by a tremendous effort been able to force herself to come to the table, and at the cost of heaven knows what inward torment, was bravely going through that painful process known as "keeping up before the servants," but she could do no more.

And the servants for whose benefit she was torturing herself of course knew approximately all about it, and were, in their way, very sorry for her.

She was a good mistress, and they were proud of her beauty, utterly scorning the pretensions of Lulu Clarke's butler as to being in service with the prettiest woman in town, and as to Mrs. Lomax and Sophy Cressage—the Cresses were poor and had only two maids—James's scorn could find the most elo-

quent words against the boasts of the former's coachman and the latter's mother's cook, who was his cousin.

Mrs. Inglis was the "finest woman in N' York"; and wasn't the Sargent portrait of her one of the best that master had ever done? Oscar was a rather inarticulate man, but he, too, was fond and proud of his mistress, and it quite took the edge off his prospective "evening out" to see her sitting there, white-faced and mute, making hardly a pretense of eating.

For Stuyvesant Harding was going the next morning, and going for an indefinite time. Miss Brown, arriving, as it may be remembered, at three o'clock by his own request, had at once seen how matters stood, and without any explanations from either of them had found herself in the difficult position of arbiter.

And if arbiters always did their work by the rule that guided this one, things would be mightily simplified in this complicated world.

"It's all come out," she had said, sitting in front of them. "I hoped it wouldn't, but I suppose it was meant to. Well, Stuyvesant Harding, it's a most excellent thing that you are going away."

"Yes," he answered.

"Do you think he—must?" faltered Margaret.

The arbiter turned on her the full light of a pair of the most absolutely honest eyes in the world.

"My dear Margaret" she answered, don't be a goose. Of course he must. A nice time you'd have if he didn't, wouldn't you?"

And Margaret had been silent.

She had for a moment been cherishing that commonest and most ridiculous illusion that she and this man who loved her might go on "being friends," but Emma Brown's green eyes pounced on that idea like a Rontgen ray and did what Rontgen rays try to do—demolished what it found. They had sat for two hours, the man, the woman and the arbiter in the shabby rainy day hat, talking with a frankness that could have been possible only with a third

person as good and trustworthy as the arbiter. Then Harding rose.

"There's no use talking any longer," he said wearily, "and I've got a million things to do. I'm going to telephone to young Bobby to dine with me—"

"He can't do that; he is dining at the Professor's," interrupted Margaret mechanically.

"Well, I'll send a messenger round there to ask him to come in later. I'll explain about that old beast, Sweet. If the man appears again, and wants more money, as is very probable, I'd advise you to tell Jinny; it's no fault of hers, and she is very sensible—"

He paused there, and the arbiter, without a word, rose and left the room.

When she came back Margaret Inglis lay on the divan, her face buried in the soft pillows. Miss Brown asked no questions, nor did she attempt cheerfulness. Ill-timed cheerfulness is a social crime and should be corrected with a discriminating use of the knout. Now Harding had gone, and Mrs. Inglis was keeping up appearances before the servants.

Just as the two women were leaving the table the telephone bell rang, and James informed his mistress that Mr. Lassels would like to speak to her.

"Hello! Hello, Bobby!"

That you, Cousin Margaret?"

"Yes."

"Is Jinny at your house?"

"Jinny! No, of course not. She told me you were to dine with them."

Bobby paused for a moment, and then went on nervously: "I was. I'm at the drug store at the corner of Sixth Avenue now. I went to the house, and—she hasn't come in."

"Good gracious!"

She heard the boy clear his throat. "I thought you must have kept her, or—or—something."

"I haven't seen her all day. What does the Professor say?"

"She went out during the afternoon, but promised to be back at six, to see someone—oh—your masseuse, I think it was."

Margaret reflected for a moment. "Oh—you mean Madame Suzanne, the

manicure. Yes—she was going there; she asked me about it. Have you seen her?"

"No. She waited until seven, and then went; she's coming back tomorrow. Good Lord, Cousin Margaret, where *can* she be?"

After a few minutes' continued conversation Bobby decided to ring up one or two other people and rang off, promising to call Margaret up as soon as—he learned anything.

Mrs. Inglis went back to the drawing-room and repeated the story to Miss Brown. It was then only half past eight, but Jinny's not being at home by that hour was at least sufficient cause for alarm.

The two women sat close together talking and wondering, while the slow minutes ticked by in the quiet room.

At half past nine Bobby appeared, pale and frightened, the flower in his coat crushed and broken, his trousers and boots caked with mud.

"I've been everywhere I could think of," he declared hoarsely. "And now—I wish you'd call up the—the hospitals; I—I *can't*!"

The big fellow sank into a chair as he spoke and covered his face with his hands.

Miss Brown went to the dining room and came back with a small glass of brandy and a biscuit.

"There—eat that biscuit, and then I'll give you the brandy," she said authoritatively. "You are worn out."

Bobby obeyed, though it would have been almost as difficult to him to swallow a hedgehog as it was to force the biscuit down his dry throat.

When he had handed the glass back to the woman who was ministering to him, he leaned back in his chair and waited until Margaret should return from the telephone room.

It seemed hours; once in a while they heard the sound of the speaker's voice as she raised it in impatience, and then the dull silence fell again. At last Mrs. Inglis came back, her long skirts sweeping softly over the polished floor.

"No such—person has been—brought to any of the hospitals," she said.

"Thank God!"

After a moment the light died from the boy's eyes, and he said painfully, as if the articulation of words hurt him: "But then—where can she be?"

Emma Brown turned to him. "Look here, Bobby," she exclaimed; "you must brace up and tell us all about it from the beginning. Don't leave out anything, for there must be a clue somewhere."

Bobby rose, as if he were back in school and had a lesson to recite.

"She went out some time during the afternoon: no one saw her go—and—that is all. She said at luncheon that she was coming here some time before dinner, and she promised the Professor that she would be back at six. I told you," he added to Margaret, "about that French woman."

"What French woman?" asked Miss Brown sharply, as Margaret nodded.

"Madame Suzanne, the manicure, used to know her mother, and she was going to take some letters and a photograph to show her and the Professor this evening. That is quite beside the question," Margaret explained, with a touch of impatience.

Miss Brown was no feminine Sherlock Holmes, and she did not at once pounce on Madame Suzanne as a person of detective genius would have done—at least in books. Margaret seemed to know what she was talking about, and that satisfied her friend, who had heard of the manicure and seen her at various houses for years.

"Well—and that is all you know?"

Bobby nodded miserably. "Yes—except that a boy brought a note for her this afternoon. The Professor thought that she might have gone in answer to the note, but we couldn't find it; and if it had been anything unusual, surely she would have shown it to the Professor or to her aunt."

"Who brought the note, Bobby?" asked Margaret.

"A poor boy. Hannah—that's the cook—opened the door, and she said he looked like a street boy. I can't imagine why a street boy should bring a note to *her*!"

Margaret rose suddenly. "Dan Sweet!" she ejaculated.

Then, very hastily, she told Bobby the story that Stuyvesant Harding had meant to tell him that evening. It was perfectly evident that Sweet, not content with the blackmail he had received, had kidnapped his granddaughter and meant to hold her for a ransom.

Miss Brown was indisposed to accept this view, calling it claptrap and blood-and-thundery, but Margaret bade her recall a recent kidnapping case in Chicago, and another in London.

"The newspapers are full of blood-and-thundery things that *have happened*," she added.

Bobby, who had turned perfectly white, held up his hand.

"For God's sake, don't let's talk about *blood*!" the poor boy said. "I—can't stand it."

As he spoke, the Professor came in, hatless and coatless, his white hair wet and blown, a pen behind his right ear, a pair of velvet slippers, wet through, on his feet.

Margaret lighted a fire, and putting the old man close to it, she gave him some wine, and then hastily told him the story of Sweet, thus winning an immediate and certain champion of her theory.

"Of course, it's he," he cried excitedly; "I was thinking of him only today. That woman who came and brought the letters told me of him. We thought he was dead, though. If he hurts Jinny," he added faintly, "I'll kill him!"

But Madame Suzanne had foreseen all this, and had made her plans accordingly.

When the detective, sent for at once, had summoned a policeman and gone to look for Sweet at the address he had given Mrs. Inglis, they found him, indeed, but how? Sound asleep in his bed sleeping so that it was impossible to wake him, and on the table and on the chairs many empty bottles.

"He's been as drunk as a lord ever since yesterday mornin'," explained a woman who lived on the same floor, and who arrived, much interested and

backed up by two other women and a man, to inquire into the cause of the coming of the "p'lice."

"The night before last he come in late and told my husband he'd had a stroke of luck and meant to celebrate, and yesterday mornin' he began. Didn't 'e, Sam?"

The man, a respectable-looking individual, assented, and as the man who had sold Sweet the whiskey was promptly forthcoming and corroborated the story of the lodgers with every sign of truth, the police came back to Mrs. Inglis and confessed that they had been mistaken. The man Sweet was no doubt an old reprobate, but there was not the slightest evidence that he had had anything to do with the disappearance of Jinny.

XIV

FOR days nothing was heard of the girl. Rewards had been offered; all the best talent of the metropolitan police was devoted to the discovery of some trace of her; but the only result of the advertising was the appearance of the boy who had taken the note to the house, and the boy, like poor Jo, knew nothing.

It was a woman who had given it to him, and she'd given him a quarter for doing it. In Washington Square she'd spoken to him. His name was Tom Riley, and he lived on Christopher Street. No, he'd never been in jail, and he was telling the truth. He didn't know whether the woman was old or young. No, he hadn't ever seen her before; he didn't remember how she was dressed; he didn't know whether she'd followed him to see if he did really deliver the note, and he'd never seen her again.

And that was all. Mr. Sweet, on whom the law kept a fatherly eye for some time, did absolutely nothing to awaken suspicion. He had a bad headache for several days, and sat at home reading newspapers and wishing he might die if he ever went on a spree again.

When brought to see Mrs. Inglis, he was sulky and cross, said they had no

right to make him come, which was perfectly true, and that, though he supposed he had done blackmailing, he wasn't in the kid stealing line. He did not pretend to be much distressed over the uncertain fate of his granddaughter, but if she came back he was going to tell her who he was, unless they'd give him more money.

Harding gave him a sharp reprimand at these words, but the man only scowled and inquired if they'd asked him enough questions.

When he had gone, Margaret asked Harding what he thought.

"It doesn't seem as if he had anything to do with it," she added; "but who else could have known?"

"I am sure that he is not guilty. He is an atrocious old brute, but I don't think he has had anything at all to do with the—the—"

"Kidnapping," whispered Mrs. Inglis, as if afraid to utter the word.

"Yes. And dozens of people must be living who knew her mother, and who might have—taken her away quite independently of Sweet," Harding returned.

"Yes, that is true, of course."

They stood alone in the library. It was late in the afternoon of the fifth day since Jinny's disappearance. Harding's failure to leave town had been a matter of course to both of them, and had led to no resumption of the subject that had so occupied them before Jinny had gone.

Emma Brown had been staying with her friend for the second time in her life—the other time was just after they had taken Roger Inglis away from his home—but neither of the women had mentioned as a detached fact the continued presence in New York of the man who was to have gone. He was there in his old place, helping, advising, at Margaret's beck and call, and all entirely without a word of comment by anybody. The new sorrow, that bade fair to be a tragedy, had for the time superseded the other.

Harding had just come from the Professor's house, where with infinite patience he had listened for the thou-

sandth time to the poor old man's suppositions, fears and hopes.

"I told him that I was sure we would, some one of us, soon have a letter with some kind of an offer. My belief is that they are waiting until we are nearly desperate, and will then ask a very big ransom. They wish to avoid all unnecessary writing, of course."

"If only you had let me advertise as I wanted to!"

"The advertising has been very wise, Margaret. You see, there is comparatively no danger for her—for her life, if we don't frighten them. That is why I insisted on giving up the police."

"You couldn't 'give up' the police. The law is investigating on its own account," she returned wearily.

"I know. But our doing nothing will quiet them."

As he spoke, a knock came at the door, and Oscar came in to ask if Mrs. Inglis would see the manicure for a moment. Margaret and Harding exchanged a glance.

Madame Suzanne had been examined by the police, but nothing had come of it, and Margaret had pitied the woman's evident grief at having been suspected. Madame Suzanne had returned on that rainy day to the Professor's at six o'clock, as she had promised, bringing two letters and an old photograph to show the young girl.

"I knew that Madame Inglees would 'ave preferred my *not* speaking again to Miss Lassels," she had said simply at the examination, "but—I was very fond of Jinny Sweet, and—I asked the old gentleman to allow me to give her the things myself."

This the Professor had verified. He had also recognized the dead Jinny Lassels's writing and her photograph. He remembered that at the time of the wedding Miss Dean, whom Jinny Sweet had mentioned to him, was ill, and that she had written to her friend a letter of regret at being unable to be present at her marriage.

The Professor's evidence, combined with the well known respectability of Madame Suzanne and the story of Mrs. Masters, the woman in whose house she

had boarded for over eight years, sufficed to clear the manicure absolutely, as she had tranquilly expected. And now, as she stood in the library, her little bag in her hand, looking a little older, a little less prosperous, than she had before the cruel finger of suspicion had been pointed at her, Harding, as well as Mrs. Inglis, pitied her.

"I wished to ask whether madame would like to give up her hour for the present," she said quietly. "I—it seemed likely."

"Thank you, Madame Suzanne. Yes I—I am too nervous just now, I think."

"Some people t'ought I might 'ave stolen Miss Lassels," the manicure went on after a brief pause, with a just perceptible touch of bitterness and a slight increase of her usual faint accent. "But I think madame knew me better. So may I ask, there is no news of the poor young lady?"

"No. None at all, Madame Suzanne. I am sorry that you were subjected to the annoyance of the—inquiry. It was not any of *us* who—who suggested it." Margaret's pale face seemed to touch the woman; perhaps it really did so.

"Ah, madame," she cried, "I am *so* sorry! It is so sad. She was—I mean, she is such a *charmante* young lady."

"Yes," answered Margaret simply.

The manicure hesitated for a moment. Then she said, her dark eyes fixed on those of Mrs. Inglis: "I read in the papers that old Sweet is still alive. Madame—it *must* be 'im! He was always so bad; he never loved poor Jinny. I think and think all day, and it seems to me it *must* be 'im!"

"No. Oh, no; he has nothing to do with it. Very well, Madame Suzanne," Margaret went on wearily; "thank you for coming, and for your sympathy. I will let you know when I need you again."

The woman took her dismissal with a sort of dignified humility and left the room.

Harding, who had gone to a distant bookcase and was turning the leaves of an old Froissart with absent-minded fingers, came back to Margaret as the door closed.

"Has Bobby been here today?" he asked.

"No. He came in late last night. Oh, Stuyve, I am so sorry for the poor boy! He is literally almost crazy!"

"Yes. It is—horrible."

"He and the poor old Professor sit and hold each other's hands, and then Bobby rushes away like a madman. Stuyve, he has taken to—to haunting the river. He thinks—*you know*."

"That is rot," retorted Harding bluntly. "They have kidnapped her for a reward, as I've said all along. I am as sure of that as I am of my own name. And before long we shall hear from them."

Then it began all over, the weary, heart crushing iteration, the oft repeated hypotheses, the hopes, and the fears.

While they talked Miss Brown came in. She had been with the Professor, and cried a little very quietly as she talked of him.

"He says you are so good to him, Stuyve," she said, wiping her eyes. "You had just gone when I arrived. And that poor old Mrs. Buck absolutely breaks my heart."

For five days, for a hundred and twenty hours, Jinny had been gone. The horror of it was so great that all those who loved and feared for her were physically tired and worn out. The three gathered there in Mrs. Inglis's library looked years older than they had a week ago.

And then the bell rang, and Bobby Lassels, thin and haggard, but with a new light in his sunken eyes, burst in on them.

"A letter! I've got a letter! God bless them, they've written at last!" he cried, sinking into a chair and sobbing like a child. "Damn them, they've shut her up for *money*!"

Harding drew a deep breath of relief, and Margaret and Emma Brown both cried.

The letter was written in a villainous hand on a very clean sheet of cheap, glossy paper. Bobby read it aloud.

If you want Jinny Lassels back, \$50,000 in notes will buy her. She is alive and well.

The money must be brought by one man in a rowboat a mile above Hawthorne on the Hudson to the man in the other rowboat at eleven o'clock tomorrow (Tuesday) morning. If any tricks are played, so that the man does not return by two o'clock to the place where Jinny Lassels is, alone and with the money, you will never have another chance.

That was all. The letter was badly written, correctly spelled and clearly enough expressed. Hawthorne is a lonely village, an hour by train from the Grand Central Station. The banks of the river here are curiously bare and unadapted to purposes of concealment; trains pass every half-hour or so for the city, or the man in question could return by carriage. The plan was well thought out and simple. And the letter, containing no definite threats, yet expressed its purpose very distinctly.

"Fifty thousand dollars!" repeated Harding slowly.

Bobby rose. "If ever any one of you go through what I have been through in these last few days," the boy said, brushing back his hair with one of his thin hands, "you'll know what I feel now." Then he turned to the door.

"Bobby—you are going to do it?" asked Margaret.

"Going to do it! Well, what do you think?"

No one questioned further the expediency of his project. No one would have dared to suggest a compromise to him. He had been a boy a few days before, taking his love for Jinny and hers for him as a delightful stroke of luck; now he had changed and was a man, and no one questioned his right to accomplish his purpose in his own way.

Harding left the house at once to tell the good news to the Professor, and a few minutes later Bobby had gone to his mother's. The two women, left alone, sat for a long time in silence, and then Emma Brown, the plain, square-waisted Emma, created a diversion by fainting away for the first time in her life. When she came to she was lying in a bed, whither the blond Oscar had carried her, and Margaret sat near her.

"What an old fool I am!" observed the sufferer with a short laugh.

"What an angel you are, Emma! As

if I didn't know that it is worrying over my troubles that has worn you out!"

"My dear Margaret, of course I worry over your troubles. I love you."

Then they were quiet for a long time, as people in perfect sympathy often are quiet. The Professor had fallen asleep, worn out and weakened by his trouble, and now suddenly comforted by Bobby's news. And Mrs. Buck was asleep; and Harding slept like a dead man in a chair by his fire; and Bobby lay on a sofa, his head in his mother's lap.

Hope had come to them all with sleep in his generous hands.

XV

Mrs. MASTERS's boarders had their luncheon at half past twelve in the basement dining room. It was a dark and not very cheerful apartment, this, with its dull snuff-colored walls and barred windows, but there are lives in which meals are the chief events of the day, and the lives of Mrs. Masters's boarders were such. Eleven women sat at the long tables, middle-aged, careworn creatures, for the most part, with lusterless, neatly arranged hair and old-fashioned, high-busted figures. Three of them were typewriters, and did their work in the house; two of them, the youngest and best dressed, were sales-women in a smart hat shop around the corner; one was a Swedish masseuse with a profitable clientele among the rich Jewesses of the city; one was an embroiderer; one painted menu cards for a big firm in Fifth Avenue, and the other three were Mrs. Masters, Mamie, her crippled daughter, and Madame Suzanne.

Mrs. Masters sat at the head of the table, and Madame Suzanne on her right. There were veal cutlets for luncheon, with mashed potatoes and stewed dried apricots and a rice pudding.

The boarders eyed the cutlets approvingly, for they looked good, and luncheon was a social function.

Mrs. Masters, a short, thin woman, with extremely deep cut lines from her nose to her mouth that gave her in the

dim light almost the air of having a drooping mustache, served the cutlets and handed them down the table, the empty plate coming back to her with great celerity.

"No news yet, muddam?" she asked, while Mamie served the stewed apricots.

Madame Suzanne shook her head; "No; I was at Mrs. Inglees's yesterday, and she told me they 'ad 'ad no news. Poor girl, it is terrible!"

One of the hat sellers looked up from her cutlet, which she was eating with much elegance of outspread little finger.

"Mrs. Clarke, the *pretty* Mrs. Clarke, was at our place this morning," she said mincingly, "with Mrs. Ned Peele; and Mrs. Peele said that Bobby Lassels had telephoned her that they had a clue. I couldn't hear *what* it was," she added, "because they finished in French."

"I'll bet they find her dead—drownded," suggested Mrs. Masters, with characteristic gloom. Madame Suzanne laughed.

"*Quelle idée!* I think she's being held for ransom. Mr. Harding has said so all along. His cousin, Mrs. Jim Leonard, told me so. You see, Bobby Lassels is very rich, and so is Mrs. Inglis."

Mamie Masters, who had never been hungry in her life, and whom the sight of the boarders' eager feeding disgusted, leaned her pointed elbows on the table.

"Of course it's that," she said in her thin voice. "I read a story once about a girl that was stole; she was a skeleton a'most when they found her. I seen Jinny Lassels at the show, and she is perfectly sweet; I hope they'll git her back soon."

"The *Sun* said this morning that the guilty parties were sure to be discovered," observed Miss Tanner, one of the typewriters; "and I hope they are. The idea of such a thing's being possible in *Noo York, today!*"

Madame Suzanne laughed. "I bet they *won't* be," she said gaily. "Jinny Lassels, of course, will come back, and no one will be gladder than me. But—

it is only in novels that Nemesis follows up the guilty!"

Several of the women agreed with her, for had she not been closely concerned in the matter? Her persecution and triumphant acquittal had for eight meals been the subject of conversation, and seemed now to lend her a certain indefinite authority on the matter.

"Yes, I often think when I'm in an electric car that the people next me may be folks we've been reading about in the papers—folks 'wanted by the police,'" remarked the menu painter, whose specialty was butterflies, but who, in private life, devoted herself to the reading of "criminal romances."

Suzanne Pare finished her stewed apricots in silence. Everything had gone well. Suspicion had turned aside from her and from her father; she knew that Jinny was alive and well, and that the money was very likely at that moment in her subordinate's pocket.

The subordinate had done his part well, and she had no fear of his trying to depart before the notes had been transferred to her. His share was enough to content him, and he had his own very potent reasons for keeping well out of the police's way; there was no fear of his turning State's evidence.

Madame Suzanne had brought off a very successful thing, and she was proud as well as pleased. For six months or so she would go on living as she had lived, and then she would go away. Paris would probably be the city she would choose in which to enjoy the fruits of her *coup*, but she was not sure. She had once been in Montevideo, and she liked the life there.

The rice pudding had arrived, and Mrs. Masters was doling it out not ungenerously, when the housemaid, who had left the room, came in, followed by two men.

"Mrs. Susan Pare," said the first man.

And Madame Suzanne knew that in spite of all her care, in spite of all her cleverness, she was found out.

"Yes?" she said, rising and standing in her place.

"Will you just come along with us?"

The man was a heavy-faced, uninspired-looking person, and her hopes rose for a moment.

"Ah, yes," she said lightly. "I will come."

Then she left the room, and with one man in front, the other behind her, went quietly up the dark stairs.

"Just come into the parlor here for a minute, will you?"

The heavy-faced man took her by the arm and they went into the chilly, unused room.

Stuyvesant Harding stood in front of the empty fireplace, and on a small gilt chair near him sat—the Nemesis at whom she had mocked—chocolate-colored Nemesis in a black dress and a long rusty crape veil.

"Mignonette!" ejaculated the prisoner.

The negress moved nervously. "Yas'm. Yas, Miss Noble. I'm very sorry, Miss Noble, but I—I had to think of the children."

Suzanne Pare, utterly at a loss, turned to Harding. "Perhaps you will tell me what this means," she said steadily.

"Certainly. It means that this woman, Mrs. Mignonette Jefferson, was at Professor Thoyt's house the morning when you were there making your—appointment with him and Miss Lassels. She recognized you as the 'Miss Noble' who came to the house in Thirty-sixth Street, and then yesterday saw your picture in a paper, in connection with your examination by Judge Whiting."

"It was the rewa'ds, Miss Noble," interrupted the negress, half frightened. "They was offering them big rewa'ds for any information, and so I thought I mought as well go an' see Mr. Lassels."

"Mr. Lassels was away," went on Harding, "and Mrs. Lassels sent Mrs. Jefferson to me. You will, at least, be obliged to explain why you and Sweet have been in the habit of meeting at that house—Oh, yes, Mrs. Jefferson saw his picture, too, and he has been arrested as well as you."

The heavy-faced man here looked at his watch and suggested that they might as well be getting along. Ma-

dame Suzanne made no effort to escape. Someone fetched her hat and jacket, and a few moments later the manicure had left Mrs. Masters's boarding house forever. It is to be hoped that the weary women who lived there found in the event some matter for satisfactory gossip. They probably did. Her connection with Sweet being speedily established beyond all doubt, both by the negress and by people who had seen them both go to the house, and Sweet, who had been consoling himself for his enforced blamelessness of life, having in his half-drunk stupor declared that his daughter would explain it all—that he was stupid, but that Sue knew what it was all about—Madame Suzanne found that the only course open to her was that of free confession.

So she told her story in a few brief words, concealing nothing, and gave the address of the house where Jinny was to be found. Then she sat down and grew old in a few minutes.

Harding telephoned to the Lasselses, and caught Bobby, who had returned and was on the point of going to the Professor's. In half an hour the two men, with two policemen, felt their way up the dark stair that had so alarmed Jinny, and five minutes later the young girl was sobbing in her lover's arms.

She was very pale and much terrified, but the room was fairly decent, her bed comfortable, and her food had apparently been the best that the neighborhood could provide.

Harding and the policemen examined the place while Bobby and Jinny sat together, their arms around each other, almost unable in their great happiness to talk.

The accomplice, a naturalized Italian, came in shortly, for policemen in plain clothes had stood about in the street to prevent his being warned, and walked unsuspectingly into the arms of his enemy, the law. The money was found untouched in his pocket. It had been given to him by Bobby, exactly as the letter had dictated, and either from a certain "honesty rooted in dishonesty," to paraphrase Tennyson, or from

fear, he had obeyed orders and brought it back to be kept until Jinny had been set free. In his pocket was found also a steerage ticket to Genoa.

Bobby took Jinny home in one of the cabs that had been left half a dozen blocks away, and the policemen marched their prey off to face his captive employers.

Nemesis meanwhile had gone home to the children with such a roll of bills in her shabby purse that it would hardly close. How true is that old saying about the wind being indeed bad that bloweth good to none!

The Professor, Mrs. Buck, Bobby, Mrs. Lassels, Miss Brown, Harding and Jinny, dined together that evening at Margaret Inglis's home. They had cried and laughed their fill, most of them, and were all quieter, but the meal was, of course, a much interrupted one. Jinny had to tell the whole story over and over again—how she arrived in the room; how the man with the thick beard had met her and told her that she must stay; how she had begged him and cried and finally fallen asleep on the floor; how the next day he had brought her more food and newspapers to read, and explained in his broken English that they were only waiting until the time should be ripe for a big ransom. He, the man, lived in the next room to hers. He had been rather kind to her, and had brought her a comb and allowed her to lock the door between the rooms when she wished.

"I knew it would not last very long," she added, one hand in the Professor's, the other in Bobby's, "but—it was awful."

The story of Sweet and his relationship to her came out quite simply, and seemed to make no particular impression on her. The main thing was that she had got back and was with the people who loved her.

Madame Suzanne's perfidy seemed to take from her all right to a relationship with her victim. She was a bad woman, and too far away from Jinny to injure her any more. Harding had tried to shut the matter up, but it had gone too far and was in the hands of the law.

Everyone must know who Jinny's grandfather was, but none of the people at the dinner seemed to care for that any more. Even Mrs. Lassels had softened.

And the wonder of its all coming out, as it had by pure chance, through the recognition of the poor negress, could not be sufficiently commented on.

"We were awful fools to be so easily convinced," Harding said once.

"That's because we are *real* people, and not men and women in a novel," retorted Miss Brown. "The woman is wonderfully clever. Think of her *daring* to go on with her work every day and talking about it and facing that examination!"

"Doddy," cried Jinny, bursting into laughter that turned to tears, "you are putting *salt* on your peach!"

After dinner, when it had been arranged that the wedding should take place the next week and the young couple sail away to England to forget all their troubles, Harding and Bobby decided that one more effort should be made to keep the matter at least from becoming a *cause célèbre*. Sweet was an old man, and, it might be hoped, would not live long; and whatever happened, he and Madame Suzanne must be bribed to leave the country later, when—their terms were out—if the conviction could not be prevented.

Bobby nodded. "Harding, I must thank you," he said, his eyes filling suddenly. "I shall never forget how good you have been." As he spoke, James approached with a telegram for Harding.

"Your man sent it over, sir." Harding read it carelessly and then stood, very pale, leaning against the wall.

"Bobby, just ask Margaret to come here for a moment, will you?" he said thickly.

When Mrs. Inglis appeared, pale, too, but very beautiful, he held out his left hand to her without moving.

"Margaret," he said, "I've had a wire from—Benham."

"Oh! Is it—Roger?"

"Yes. He—is dead."

There was a long pause, and then

she said, looking down at her blue gown:

"Let us go back in there—to the Professor and Jinny."

"I think you don't quite understand me. It is Roger, your husband, who is dead."

She nodded gently. "Ah, yes, I understand, and—I want to be

sorry. Let us go to the Professor; he is so good."

Harding opened the door and she passed him, going slowly toward the old man who was good.

Then he took his hat and went away without a word, for he understood. He walked for hours before going home, but he was not thinking of Jinny.



ENCHANTED GROUND

By THEODOSIA GARRISON

WE walked one day upon enchanted ground
And never guessed it. Neither you nor I
Marveled the glory that we wandered by—
The clearer air, the finer scent and sound.

Here was the garden in whose fragrant round
Blossomed the joy the jealous Fates deny.
We walked one day upon enchanted ground
And never guessed it, neither you nor I.

Upon our way we passed, unblessed, uncrowned,
Back to a common earth, a duller sky,
Nor felt how close that moment wasted nigh
The treasure that our lightest glance had found.
We walked one day upon enchanted ground
And never guessed it, neither you nor I.



CONSIDER THE TREES

THE trees are lovely in summer; so are the women. But how different are the women and the trees as to their clothes! To be sure, both are delightfully clothed; yet, with the abundant raiment with which the trees are supplied, they require but one trunk to hold it all.

TWENTY MINUTES

By LUCINE FINCH

JOHN, I want to be a Suffragette."

"What's that?" John took out his pipe and looked across the breakfast table at his cunning little wife with her cunning little baby in her lap. The cunning little wife was sipping her tea composedly, looking at him over the cup, and the cunning little baby was trying seriously to swallow three spoons and a fork all at the same time.

"Take the fork out of the baby's eye and don't talk nonsense," said John, putting his pipe back into his mouth and scowling. If Norie got this notion into her head! Art was all right, and he bought paints for her to play with, but Suffragettes! John scowled more than ever.

"Now, John Broadhurst, you listen to me! I'm *not* talking nonsense, and the baby is *not* putting the fork into his eye. It's only a spoon, and it's not his eye, anyhow; it's his mouth."

"He doesn't know his mouth from his eye, and I believe *he* wants to be a sword swallower!" John shook himself and came across to kiss her. "Norie, darlin'," he said, "you're far too little. You wouldn't measure up, and they wouldn't take you."

"Why, John Broadhurst! They don't measure them!"

"Yes, they do, Norie. And weigh them, too. They have to be Amazons, those Suffragettes, and in fighting trim. The baby's in the teapot!"

"John, dear, listen to me. I'm terribly in earnest."

"All right. Give me the baby and let's go into the library so Williams won't hear you. I don't want Williams

to get the idea that— Oh, Norie, darlin', you a Suffragette! It's funny, that's what it is. And if you don't break this baby of chewing things—"

"They always chew things."

"Who? Babies or Suffragettes?"

"John— Babies!"

"Oh! Well, he's chewing my hair, all right. Take him off me. Now, what are you in earnest about?"

"Wait a minute! Oh, John, isn't he too adorable? Look at him! He's trying to climb up your legs!"

"Now he's chewing my trouser leg. He has no discrimination, Norie, and that's a fact. Go on. I've only twenty minutes before my train."

"Well"—Norie wrinkled up her face in the most fascinating manner—"well, John, I—I am bursting to say something about Woman's Rights—but I don't know what to say."

John laughed heartily. "Good!" he said. "I'm glad you don't—there isn't much to be said."

"John Broadhurst! You ought to want me to be a Suffragette."

"And find you chained to a door mat somewhere? No, sir! And the baby squealing at home like a little pig! No, Norie, darlin', you paint pictures like a good little artist, and leave Woman's Rights alone."

"But, John—"

"Well?"

"Oh, John, look at him! He's trying to sit on your hat! Cunning thing!"

"The deuce he is!"

"Oh, let him have it, John! Poor darling, he's breaking his heart!"

"He can howl, can't he? Don't cry, old chap; it's my best, you know. Here!"

"John! A cigar!"

"He won't hurt it."

"Hurt it!"

"I was trying to treat him as man to man."

"Now, John, you've *got* to listen to me. Mrs. Crabtree said: 'Make your husband listen to you. He'll try to escape it, but pin him down.' Now you're pinned!" And Norie and the baby sat down on John's lap.

John sighed and blew smoke into the baby's face.

"Well, go ahead. You want me to have you chained to a door mat on our street?"

"John Broadhurst! No!"

"Well, what is it you want?"

"Goose! I want Woman's Rights!"

"Well, all right, dear. Get 'em and send the bill to me."

"John Broadhurst! Do you want me to wear trousers and ride a motorcycle?"

"Lord, no!"

"Then you listen to me."

"I'm listening."

"Well, as I said, I want the right to vote."

"To vote for what?"

"Oh, I don't care. Anything. Mrs. Crabtree said: 'Demand the right to vote.' You know she is English and terribly advanced. Why, John, you'd blush to hear some of the daring things she says!"

"I don't doubt it for an instant."

"But I admire her enormously. And she says— The baby's sucking your green tie!"

"Good Lord!"

"People ought not to wear things that their babies can't chew. Green's the worst color. And you won't listen to me!"

"I'm listening. You'd got to where Mrs. Crab said the baby was sucking my green tie."

"John! Mrs. Crabtree! And she didn't say that! I did, Goosie!"

"Oh! Well, what did she say, then?"

"She said— Am I too heavy?"

"Well, is she?"

"I mean I—am I too heavy?"

"Oh! You! No. Go on."

"She said: 'Demand the right to vote.'"

"To vote?"

"Yes."

"At a poll?"

"It doesn't have to be a pole; any place where voting is."

"You'll get squashed—in a crowd. You hate crowds, Norie, darlin'."

"I know. But you'll take me and we'll go in the car. She gave us all a badge, but I felt so bold wearing mine that I took it off. See? It says, 'Votes for Women.'"

"So it does! What'll you vote for?"

"Oh—I don't care. You'll tell me the right thing, then I'll sign my name—and that's what troubles me."

"What? Signing your name?"

"Yes."

"There's no harm in that. It's when you sign another's that the trouble comes."

"I know. But it makes me nervous to sign my name to a paper. It feels so irrevocable."

"Well, it generally is."

"Then, what I want to know is: can I vote without signing my name?"

"Some make a mark."

"What sort of mark?"

"Oh—a cross or a star or whatever he chooses."

"My sign is a pine tree. Could I make that? It's like this. Lend me your pencil—now your cuff—it won't show! There! Isn't that cunning?"

"Yes. But you're cunnin' er."

"John! Don't drop your 'g's. Could I sign with that?"

"Yes. But they'll ask if you can't write."

"If I can't write! What's that got to do with it?"

"The baby's suspiciously quiet. He's behind the big chair. I hear him gurgling."

"Aren't his little noises too dear? He's all right. He's trying to climb through. What's writing got to do with it?"

John laughed.

"You're just the type," he said, "who goes and does it because Mrs.

Crab — who's advanced — says you ought to. Now, Norie, you aren't advanced — you're just plain darlin'!"

"John Broadhurst! I *am* advanced!"

"Norie, darlin', don't frown. It wrinkles up your forehead and scares me."

"There! Am I frowning now? I don't want any wrinkles! Poor Mrs. Crabtree's face is like leather."

"That's the Suffragette complexion. They all get it."

"Oh, John—no!"

"Oh, Norie—yes!"

"John, you're teasing me, as usual."

"So I am! It's a shame. I'm a brute!"

"You are, dearest. Mrs. Crabtree says most men are. And you won't listen to me, and I've got to write a report of what you said and read it—"

"What!"

"Yes, at the club. Mrs. Crabtree wishes us to report what our husbands say. Five minutes a husband."

"Well, I'll be—"

"John!"

"Well, but Norie, I will—"

"Will what?"

"Be damned. It's an old classic word. Will Regina report, too? She got you into this."

"Regina! Why, John, Regina's husband is dead!"

"Well, I thought Mrs. Crab said things that would raise the dead."

"Why, John dear!"

"Didn't you say so?"

"Mercy, no! I said you'd blush to hear some of the things she said."

"Oh!"

"Well, what's writing got to do with it?"

"With what?"

"With voting."

"With voting?"

"Yes, you said— Is today Thursday?"

"No, I didn't."

"Silly! I mean, is it?"

"Is what?"

"Is today Thursday?"

"It is."

"The meeting is at three today.

We have a Lady Something-or-other to talk to us on the English woman's attitude toward suffrage."

"It's fists up! How do you know she's a lady?"

"Why, John!"

"Now, what's the matter? You're wrinkling up your forehead again. You'll be wearing glasses and looking intellectual next!"

"John, how can you be so flippant about the human intellect? Mrs. Crabtree says it is the greatest force in life."

"She does, eh?"

"Yes. And that women have far more than men. It's proven every day by statistics."

"What else does she say?"

"Oh, John, she's so clever! She says such brilliant things! And scathing! Why, the men would *squirm* if they were there!"

"Which, I take it, they aren't."

"No. One reporter came. But he got perfectly hysterical and had to leave. I thought he was only laughing the way you do at me, sometimes—"

"Norie!"

"Well, you do! You know you do!"

"Never!"

"Mrs. Crabtree said it was pure nerves."

"Over the meeting?"

"Yes. She had just made a brilliant hit at the men. I didn't quite catch the point, but he roared—and had to leave."

"He must be the one that wrote up a meeting last week. That fellow, whoever he was, got hysterical, too! I don't wonder. It's a hysterical situation!"

"Mrs. Crabtree makes no compromise for men."

"She doesn't!"

"No."

"What sort of hat does she wear?"

"Well it isn't exactly a hat, at all. It's more like a bonnet—but not much like a bonnet either."

"Does she wear it on her head?"

"Why, of course!"

"Then, it's a hat, you may depend upon it! I always tell 'em that way."

"It has faded flowers on it."

"For economy or sentiment?"

"And, John, she wears a fringe!"

"What, Norie, a Fiji fringe?"

"Oh, John! No! A fringe bang!"

"You mean it comes off with a bang."

"John, you ridiculous fellow! You knew what I meant all along."

"Where's Mr. Crab?"

"Dead."

"I don't blame him one bit!"

"She's so in earnest! She says life is at a woman's feet *now*, if she only knew it."

"That's nothing new. It's always been there and always will be."

"It's cunning of you to say that, John. I just love the way your hair turns yellow at the ends!"

"Do you? Where's the baby now?"

"Heavens! He's sucked all the mahogany off the chair! Ring for his nurse! They said that chair was real old mahogany!"

"Never mind, Norie, darlin'; we know it's old anyhow. Still, you can't tell. I saw a sign the other day: 'Antique furniture manufactured here."

"Don't let anybody kiss him, Marie."

"Nor you, Marie."

"John, dearest!"

"Norie, darlin'."

"John, ten minutes of your time is gone, and you haven't said anything!"

"How could I? You got a lead start of me!"

"Why, John, I haven't said a word!"

"Oh, haven't you? Neither did Tennyson's brook."

"That's an old joke. Now listen, darling. I'll get a paper and put down what you say—we're only allowed five minutes. I think she's had unhappy experiences with men. She's so against them."

"I bet they have had unhappy experiences with her!"

"She looks like an old maid."

"I bet she does! You don't, Norie, darlin'."

"It's my new puff. Aren't they dears? I got them by the merest chance. Mrs. Burnham telephoned that she had just had a head come in to match mine."

"A head to match yours? Never!"

"John, dear, some poor creature had to sell her hair to buy bread!"

"Well, that's better than her soul. Some of them have to do that."

"I know, John. Isn't it too terrible?"

"It's pretty bad. Let's be cheerful."

"John, I often think how protected I am with you."

"Well, I should say!"

"You dear! Now for your speech. It ought to begin something like this: 'Women, dearest, are—'"

"Oh! You're going to tell me what to say and I'm going to say it; then you're going to write it down. Is that it?"

"No-o, not exactly. But I know what Mrs. Crabtree wants said, and I thought it would save us time. Besides, I'd like to make an impression with my husband."

"Oh, you would?"

"Yes. Go on."

"All right. How's this: 'Women, dearest—' Can't I say 'darlin'?'?"

"No."

"All right. 'Women, dear wife—' How's that?"

"It sounds so planned."

"Planned!"

"Be as natural as you can. Just open your mouth—"

"So?"

"Oh, you silly man!"

"Women are great bullies."

"John, dear!"

"I mean beauties."

"Do you think we care only about beauty?"

"No, of course not. There's a spot on your left cheek."

"Where? I don't see any."

"And one to match it on your right. Red. I thought you didn't care about beauty; you said you didn't."

"Well, don't argue—even if you are a lawyer. Oh, John, what's a criminal lawyer? One who's committed a crime?"

"Yes, generally."

"Oh! Well, go on with your speech."

"Let me see. Where was I?"

"You weren't anywhere."

"Oh, wasn't I? I said women were great beauties—all but Suffragettes—and therefore they will in time control all things, even votes."

"Wait! Don't go so fast. 'Even votes.' That sounds well!"

"What's the need of making them go to dirty polls and meet unpleasant characters? Let them stop at home and control their men, and the votes will take care of themselves."

"Your poor typist! I lost half of that. But it's lovely! Do I control your vote?"

"Do you? Well, I should say so! Do you suppose for an instant, Norie, darlin', that if you disapproved of a man—as a man, I mean—that I'd vote for him?"

"Oh, John! Really?"

"Not much! You're It, Norie!"

"John, you mean it? I'll tell them all you said!"

"Women, forever!"

"John, your tie is quite moist still. Can't you run up and change it?"

"Not a minute to spare. Good-bye, darlin'. Home at five today. And we'll dash out together."

"I'll tell you all about the meeting then."

"Do, there's a dear! Good-bye!"

"Good-bye. Oh, John!"

"Yes?"

"Never mind! Go on. I'll tell you tonight. I can't shout it."

"Is it something Mrs. Crab said?"

"Yes."

"Then don't, or I'll blush. You said I would."

"John Broadhurst!"



OUT OF THE MISTS OF DREAM

By ARTHUR STRINGER

OUT of the mists of Dream, where Regret is crowned with gold,
Where with the autumn of yearning the years wax never old,
As the sunset calls to the silence, as the starlight seeks the sea,
You and your twilit eyes still beckon and turn to me;
Turn with a touch of the glory where golden skylines gleam,
Turn to me still through the gloaming, out of the mists of Dream!

Out of the mists of Dream, where the seasons know no change,
Where, should a love endure, all sorrow and loss are strange;
Steadfast unto the end, and tender and ever true,
Broods the unaltering glory, the sad, glad eyes of You—
You who have called and waited, as the ocean calls the stream,
And my soul has sought and drawn you, out of the mists of Dream!



TO know thyself is wisdom; to know how not to impart that knowledge to others—that's cleverness.

June, 1910—5

A FANCY OF CENTRAL PARK

By NANCY BYRD TURNER

THE fluttering fountains flaunt and spray
Where flowers star the grass,
And romping squirrels wink and peer
To see the pageant pass.
With hoof and wheel and horn and bell
And fall of myriad feet,
The chorus of the surging throng
Swells outward to the street;
Old age and youth and babyhood,
The wrinkled and the fair,
High beating hope and sweet content,
Cold fear and gray despair;
Life at its best, life at its worst,
They hurry, linger, stay
Along the sun and shadow aisles,
The People of Today.

Perhaps it comes to Central Park
Between deep night and dawn,
That stranger throngs crowd lightly back
From many a long year gone,
The dim, dead folk of yesterday
That used to know these ways;
Old pride and joy and tragedy
Of other, perished days.
And solitary forms approach,
And lovers loiter by,
And dusky groups draw near and drift
Asunder, silently;
Upon their face an ancient light,
As though they smiled to know
How far away they fared, to meet
From out the Long Ago;
How chill a way they must return
Before the east is gray,
Dim aliens of an hour, the phantom
Folk of Yesterday!

Ah, who can say that, from the mist
Of many a long year gone,
This does not come to Central Park
Between the dark and dawn?

A BOTTLE OF YQUEM

By T. D. PENDLETON

NO, nothing but the Silver Seal. I sorrow, myself, that I am obliged to say it."

The little waiter's voice broke; his hand was unsteady as he covered the far from immaculate cloth with a clean napkin and served me a thin, poorly flavored soup. He wore a rusty jacket, but his much darned linen was irreproachable and his service of a quality out of accord with the mean little road house.

"You have not always been accustomed to serve Silver Seal," I said.

The ghost of a smile touched the little man's delicate lips. "In truth, monsieur is right," he answered; "but it has been so many years that I have served in places like this"—he made a swift Gallic gesture of contempt—"I astonish myself that monsieur knows I was once in better situation."

"Never mind about that, Jean—is it Jean?"

"I am Jean, indeed, but *hélas*, it is that I am no more able to call myself 'Honest Jean' that I find myself here."

I had sent Benedict to the nearest crossroads for gasoline. Benedict's half-hour had yet ten minutes to go; besides, I knew how often crossroads gasoline is a vanishing quantity. Reasoning from the quality of the soup, I dared not essay the roast.

"Tell me the story, Jean."

The little man turned and swiftly swept the empty room with his eyes. Then he stood still, silhouetted against the red sunset light of the open window in the attitude of waiting for me to finish a *filet*, so that he might serve me a salad, and began in the velvet

soft yet curiously distinct voice of his kind:

"Was it in 'Frisco or New York that I served that winter? It little matters. It is so long ago now. Many great new hotels have reared themselves high toward heaven since that October day when I first saw so beautiful Madame come into the café with the Big Monsieur who named himself her husband.

"Madame was slim and colorless, and the peculiarly straight light brown hair of her looked always—ah—windblown. Yes, that is it, windblown. Madame was strangely like some slender young white birch tree, with the brown foliage of her tossed by an October wind. Of the features of her I can tell you nothing. One saw only the eyes looking out from the windblown hair as one sees the stars through the foliage hair of the white birch lady in October dusks.

"But *hélas, hélas*—that big brute who was the husband of Madame looked not at all into the eyes of his wife. He looked always at the girls of the theater who sat laughing over their wine at some table near the center of the room. But I, Jean, who always served the Big Monsieur at the little table by the window, I saw always the beautiful sad eyes of Madame, which were like stars seen through wind-tossed brown foliage, and I was young then, so long ago now, and I had in the breast of me an ache of pity. The little table became to me an altar whereon I laid offerings. Oysters of such an unapproachable fatness! Lobsters of what juiciness! I have said that I was then well up in my profession, and

always I was able to secure the best the house afforded."

Again the ghost smile touched the little man's lips; the lids of his right eye came near to meeting. He retrieved by a sudden motion as if to brush away a mote and went on:

"But so beautiful Madame did not notice my offerings more than if I had brought her sawdust. The eyes of her held themselves always upon the Big Monsieur, who looked at some other woman. At last the neglect of Madame's husband grew so that she was obliged to pretend she occupied her attention with some other thing while he gazed at the tables in the center of the room.

"One Sunday evening—and now I am coming to the story—Madame and the Big Monsieur came early into the café. The extreme rudeness of him would have stung to sharp words the vanity of any other woman, but Madame sat silent, the sad eyes of her looking hungrily at that big brute, while he stared with open desire at the laughing girls of the theater. The young heart of me swelled in my bosom with pity of the situation and with rage at the cruel 'must be' of the thing we call life; and suddenly I was seized of a desire to be of some small help to beauty so vainly sorrowing itself. Therefore, before I took the order of her husband, I lifted a newspaper from the window seat and placed it on the table before the eyes of Madame. The paper was nothing more than the magazine section of the Sunday *Trumpet*, but it seemed that for once I had been able to do the lovelorn wife of the Big Monsieur a service. The glance of her fell upon the paper, and she kept it there, so that at least now the big brute's neglect of her was not so apparent to others in the room.

"On the way to the kitchen I embraced myself with joy. When I brought the *hors d'œuvre* I had even more cause for felicitating myself. I found Madame looking no longer with pretense at the paper I had given her. Madame read. It was even evident that she interested herself in the printed

page. When I started to remove the paper before serving, she asked me to leave it on the table. This was the first time she had spoken to me. I folded the great sheet, that held that disagreeable odor of printer's ink, and obeyed Madame, and after I had served the coffee I noticed that the folded sheet was again under the glance of Madame's eyes."

With a single swift movement, little Jean bent over me and suggested lighting the room. "No, no," I said; "I like the sunset. Leave the room as it is and let me have the story to the end."

"It shall be as you wish. I will tell you all."

He resumed his attitude by the window—which was exactly the attitude of waiting for me to finish a *filet* so that he might serve me a salad—and continued:

"I left Madame reading the magazine section of the big Sunday newspaper. Well, then: after I had brought the check and had gone to the desk of the cashier, I returned with the change of the bill—that big brute who named himself the husband of Madame always waited for his change if the amount happened to be more than one dollar—then the two, the Big Monsieur and Madame his wife, left the room.

"When they had gone I picked up Madame's newspaper from the table where she had left it. Under the sheet I found a silver coin. I knew it was because the Big Monsieur allowed her so little that she had given me little, and I blamed her not that the coin was silver. I have noticed that big brutes always—for the glory of themselves—clothe their women expensively but allow the poor creatures little besides. I have said that the heart in the breast of me was young. I folded the newspaper tenderly. It had served to hold so beautiful Madame's thought for a little. It would serve me as well when I should go off duty at midnight.

"Therefore, when I had turned on the light in my little apartment, the newspaper, still folded at the page Madame had deemed interesting, found itself

immediately under my eyes. I knew it was the same page she had read because I had plainly seen over the shoulder of her when I had brought the bowl of rose-scented water for her fingers the picture of some Roman ruin which I now identified, but I had much surprise to see that *the lower half of the page had been torn off!* It was obvious that Madame had there found something worth a second reading and she had taken that portion of the page with herself.

"I have said that the heart of me was young, very young, but probably I might not have gone out for another copy of the paper, so late the hour was—I do not know—but in that moment it happened that, on his way to bed, at my door little Dufois knocked. He asked me had I the *Trumpet* seen; and he added that it contained the best account of the Labor Meeting. He threw the paper to me. In—ah—*involontairement* I to the second page turned, the page with the picture of the Roman ruin in the center of it—"

Little Jean suddenly faced toward the window where one could see the west swiftly darkening. "I see nothing of monsieur's *mécanicien*, but without doubt he now soon will come. Perhaps—"

"Go on, Jean. You found the columns of the second page of the *Trumpet* intact in the copy Dufois had thrown to you. You read the matter that had been missing from the copy you had brought with you from the *café*. What was the nature of it?"

"It is permitted that you shall see for yourself the printed words which had so interested Madame that she had torn them from the sheet and taken them with herself."

Little Jean produced from some region beneath his jacket a worn leather pocketbook, and took therefrom a newspaper clipping, which he laid on the tablecloth in front of me. The last rays of the fast dropping sun came through the open window and I read as through a bloody haze. The matter contained in the clipping was of the ordinary space filler class and

purported to be foreign correspondence. It was postmarked "Bordeaux," and the last paragraph ran:

A mild sensation has been created here in the wine district by the alleged deathbed confession of one Paul Gallant, who died here last week. The story said to have been told by Gallant in his last hours is as fantastic as any tale of Poe's. It appears, from what the dying man related to his hearers, that in his youth Paul Gallant, who was a night watchman for one of the great wine-makers, was mad of love for a cold mistress who died without requiting him. Paul's adolescence occurred in the early years of the germ theory, when all France was listening, though grudgingly, to Koch's first knocks at the door of nature's secret treasure houses, and the poor half-cracked, broken-hearted Paul became so obsessed of faith in the almighty bacillus that he finally believed that a single drop of blood from the heart of a true lover would be able to conquer the antagonistic bacilli in the veins of the veriest brute, and convert him to a tender, pure passion. This belief of Gallant's was the hypothesis of his fantastic plan to die in such manner that he might leave to the world his own heart's blood teeming with the microbes of purest love. His position as night watchman gave him access to the wine vats. He would open his veins and dope as many vats as the quantity of his blood and the endurance of his strength allowed him to do; then he would die happy, knowing that every man who should drink a single glass of the wine from those particular vats would be immediately changed into a true lover.

Paul chose a moonlit night, bent over the nearest wine vat and stuck a knife between his sinistral ribs. But at that moment, fortunately for poor, mad Paul, something happened—something unprecedented. One of the owners of the wine house, doubting his half-cracked watchman's reliability, came to assure himself that all was well. He rescued Gallant, but not before a pint or so of the young fellow's blood had gone into the vat of Yquem.

Of course, Paul did not mention this latter fact to the owner of the wine, and eventually the contents of that vat were bottled and sold along with the rest of that year's vintage of Yquem.

What was the vintage? Ah, there's the fly in the ointment. The hearers of Gallant's strange deathbed tale asked him for the date, but they asked too late. His mind had wandered again, and they must content themselves with his vague "twenty years ago or thereabouts." The owner who had witnessed the attempted suicide had kept silence, and he is now long dead.

Did the contents of that vat into which Gallant said he bled his heart's blood remain in France? Did the wine land in smoky

London? Did it perhaps find its mark in America? Is it not entirely within the realm of the possible that a bottle or two of that Yquem exists somewhere today?

Little Jean was again beside me, holding a match at exactly the proper angle.

"Monsieur smiles. I, Jean, the waiter, also smiled that Sunday evening so long ago after I had read the—ah—yellow story in the magazine section of the *Trumpet*. Then once more I remembered myself of how the beautiful Madame had so interested herself in the story from Bordeaux that she had carried the paper with herself when she left the café, and immediately I smiled no more. My eyes filled themselves with moisture. Monsieur comprehends?

"That night I slept not soundly. Fantastic dreams possessed themselves of my brain, in which I waltzed with a bottle of Yquem, which wore a black mask over the printed date of its vintage. And when I removed the black mask at twelve of the clock—as one removes a mask at midnight that he may show to himself the mouth of the woman with whom he has danced—I found that the vintage was in no wise extraordinary and I had bitter disappointment—as one so often does have upon revealing to himself the mouth of the woman at the masquerade. At last, when the dawn came, the dawn of the great city that is but a travesty of the arrival of *l'aurore* in far-off Provence, the so ugly leaden color of it seemed the very color of my own spirit.

"The same strange—ah—depression yet held me when I went on duty at the hour of six in the evening. I have said that I was well up in my profession, and thus it was that I served in the café in the best hours, the hours of the evening. And when Madame entered the room with the Big Monsieur, her husband, suddenly it made itself known to me that something was about to happen, something that you would call—ah—big.

"Therefore when the two, Madame and the Big Monsieur, were seated as

usual at the little table by the window and I was about to remove the caviare, I had not surprise to hear Madame say in the low minor voice of her which was like an October wind sighing through dying leaves:

"I believe I shall prefer something other than the Monopole today. A sauterne perhaps. The Yquem will serve.'

"Within me the heart of me nearly stilled itself of its beating. So beautiful, sad Madame, had she then belief in the story of Paul Gallant? I knew that all the soul of her yearned without avail for the love of that big brute who was her husband. Dying Gallant had said that a single glass of the wine into which he had bled himself of the blood of his heart would be sufficient to—Did Madame in truth believe, and did she hope? Ah, what in all the universe finds itself equal to the hope of a hopeless woman?

"The Big Monsieur looked at his wife with somewhat the astonishment a butcher might show at the protest of a lamb; then he, with his eyes already again on the tables in the center of the room, said:

"Order what you please. But you, waiter, make haste—if there is such a thing in you."

"My hands, and also the teeth of me, clenched themselves with rage, but quickly I brought the wine card, and from it Madame ordered the oldest vintage of the Yquem we had thereon listed, which, strangely enough, was about the approximate year of Paul Gallant's attempted self-destruction over the wine vats.

"Madame barely touched her glass with her lips, but ah, the yearning in the sad eyes of her as she watched the Big Monsieur drink! It was like to kill the young heart of me to see her thus.

"After that, each time the two entered the café it was the same. Always she suggested the Yquem, and he, not caring for her enough that he wondered at her strange sudden taste for sauterne, drank what she ordered, with his eyes turned upon some other woman.

"And I, Jean, though I knew the Big Monsieur was one great brute worth the little finger of no woman at all, I also knew this, that nothing under the heaven but the love of this same big brute who was her husband would ease the wild beat of so beautiful Madame's pulse. It was now evident that she did believe the story of Paul Gallant, who, dying, had said that one glass of the wine into which he had bled himself was able to change him who might drink it into a true lover. Was it possible, then, that the finding of a certain single bottle of Yquem could procure for her the desire of her soul and render the sad stars that were the eyes of her able to drown themselves in tears of joy?

"I have said that the heart within me was young. In the language of your country—pardon, monsieur—the—ah—situation was up to me.

"Then it began that I slept not at all. In the long hours of the nights I tossed myself between my narrow sheets, thinking, thinking, always thinking. In the wide world, somewhere, existed a certain bottle of wine that I must find or go mad. But how, then, was I, a poor waiter—the good God alone knows how those of my profession would be able to support themselves but for the occasional happiness of serving gentlemen of appreciation—how was I, Jean, to find what I so ardently desired?

"All my life made of itself one great—ah—quest. I studied the wine cards of other hotels and restaurants; all of them listed about the same sauternes that our own cellars contained. It was like—ah—how is it you say it?—looking for a bodkin in a hay shock. Yet, looking back upon those days now, I think that always from the first I had within me, deep here in the breast of me, certainty that one day the hiding place of that thing which I sought would reveal itself to me.

"Thus it was that in January, when our annual importation for our cellars had been unpacked, I had not surprise to learn that the hotel had caused to be made for itself a new wine list,

which contained at its very end an appendix under the heading: 'Our Own Importation of Old Chateau Wines.'

"The vintage of the Yquem thus listed was by some years older than the approximate year of Paul Gallant's attempted suicide, but it had made itself plain to me that an old man might with ease have forgotten himself of the flight of a half-dozen years. So then, the next time Madame suggested sauterne to the Big Monsieur I, Jean, the waiter, in turn mentioned the 'Old Chateau' vintages we had. But the Big Monsieur took his eyes from the tables in the center of the room sufficiently long to say:

"'Nonsense! Why should I pay money for beastly labels? This 'Old Chateau' business is a fraud pure and simple, a clever scheme to separate fools from their money. The three-dollar-and-a-half Yquem we have ordered before is good enough.'

"Did the sad eyes of Madame speak to me?

"On my way to the wine steward I arrested myself, and I erased from the Big Monsieur's order the vintage he had chosen and substituted 'Old Chateau Yquem.'

"I have made it plain that, in regard to women, the taste of the Big Monsieur was—ah—crude. In regard to sauternes, the taste of him was more crude. He drank the 'Old Chateau' and was not able to show himself the difference between the wine he had just drunk and the vintage he usually ordered. Madame watched the Big Monsieur with the same yearning in the sad eyes of her, hoping, *hélas, hélas!* And *hélas* for the hope of hopeless women! But I, Jean, this time hoping also, I watched the Big Monsieur, the muscles of me tense, the breath of me suffocating itself. Nothing happened—nothing.

"From my own pocket I paid the six dollars and a half that was the difference between the price of the wine the Big Monsieur had ordered and the so beautiful old wine he had—ah—*ignorantissime* swallowed. Even cheerfully I paid this difference. Had not I

embraced to myself the happiness of striving in the cause of Madame of the eyes like sad stars through brown October foliage? It simply had not happened that the lady Fate smiled on that particular day. One other day, tomorrow perhaps—who knew?—that same lady Fate might hold herself in different mood.

"Later in the week, once again did Madame, with that sublime hope that was hers, order a bottle of Yquem. This time I substituted a vintage of our 'Old Chateau Wines' which was of a date a year older than the vintage I had before substituted, and when the Big Monsieur had drained the bottle and I had paid the difference in cost to the cashier, I was the poorer by more than ten American dollars. What matter? Had not I deep within me the supernal happiness of striving, however futile my efforts, for the hearts-ease of beauty distressed?

"But as I have said the recompense of the waiter is so pitifully meager. Of a certainty, this could not much longer continue that I should be able to keep on with the quest of the priceless draught which Madame desired to offer to the Big Monsieur, and at last it was that I agonized myself for the reason that I must stand quiet while that brute drank Yquem of the ordinary vintages, which for all the chance it held of containing a drop of Paul Gallant's blood, might as well have been ditch water.

"At last, in the month of April, I was no longer able to compel myself to endure the sight of Madame's hopeless hope. Then it was that I became no longer able to call myself honest.

"I had learned that in the cellars were a dozen or so bottles of a vintage which my soul told me might indeed contain the blood of poor Paul Gallant. Of money no longer had I one dollar. I watched for a chance stealthily, as the cat watches the hole of the mouse. I gained access to the cellars—no matter now by what means—but access for myself I did gain, and I took from the 'private stock' of that wine cellar two bottles of the most precious vintage of

the Yquem, wine so old that not even was it listed under our 'Old Chateau Wines.'

"Safely upstairs once more, I, in a convenient hiding place, left the bottles—which I had wrapped in my coat—and waited for the advent of Madame and the Big Monsieur.

"It was not long that I waited."

"While I watched the Big Monsieur write his order for dinner and the usual quart of Yquem, the knees of me so shook that barely was I able to stand. But strange it was that at last, when into the wine glasses I, the waiter, served the contents of the bottle I had taken from the cellars of my employers, I had pallor, calm. And my hand trembled not, even when I saw that the wine I served had a faint pink color.

"The Big Monsieur raised his glass to his lips, with the eyes of him yet always turned toward the tables in the center of the room. He drank. He drank again. Then he drank yet again, the Big Monsieur. He sighed, and still holding the glass, turned to Madame.

"Dearie, you are beautiful tonight," he said softly. "What have you done to yourself, sweetheart?"

"At that moment I was about to serve a salad. It was with difficulty that I held the fork steady, so tumultuously was the joy dancing within the heart of me. I left them with the eyes of them caressing the one pair the other, as one sees the eyes of the newly wed do. And when I returned with the coffee I saw the Big Monsieur suddenly release the fingers of Madame, which he had been pressing under the table. And Madame herself? One look at her was enough. The sad eyes of her had indeed drowned themselves in tears of joy."

The red glow of the sunset came no longer through the open window. The little waiter struck a match and lighted the oil lamp which swung in its bracket overhead. His voice was cheerful.

"I hear monsieur's *mécanicien* without. Will monsieur have his coat?"

"But, Jean, you? Your theft of the wine became known?"

Again came the ghostlike smile to the delicate lips.

"Oh, me? I was—ah—caught with the goods, is it you say? The remaining bottle of the old Yquem was found wrapped in my coat. I was publicly disgraced. Then of course it was that no longer could I employ myself in the best places. I sank lower, always lower."

Little Jean made again the swift Gallic gesture of contempt.

"But what matter?" he said. "I was ruined in my profession, but had not I to myself given the happiness of being able to stand outside the window of the café at the hour of dinner and through the window see the Big Monsieur gazing with all the tenderness of the lover into the eyes of so beautiful Madame? Nightly, I, Jean, shabby, hungry, thirsty, thus stood outside that window and watched, myself clothed by the joy that enveloped her, fed by the tender words to her that fell from the lips of the Big Monsieur, quenched by the happy light in Madame's eyes.

"This continued for one week that I stood there nightly, rejoicing myself that it was true that I, Jean, had done this thing, had made it possible that the sad eyes of Madame had been able to drown themselves in tears of joy. *Hélas*, for the poor me, who knew not that he had meddled with the business of the gods!

"I continued to rejoice myself, until one evening it happened that I, standing in the shadows by the open window of the café looking in upon so beautiful Madame and the Big Monsieur, who was now by the miracle of Paul Gallant's blood turned into a true lover, perceived myself of this, that no longer did the eyes of Madame gaze always into the eyes of the Big Monsieur. The eyes of the Big Monsieur, indeed, looked constantly into the eyes of his wife with tenderness, devotion, but

strangely, the attention of Madame held itself upon a certain table nearer the center of the room, where some big brutes drank and laughed together. I heard the Big Monsieur address Madame in words of endearment, but it was obvious that she listened not. An icy hand grasped my heart!

"For days I went no more to stand in the shadows. But after a week had dragged itself past I took myself once more to the old place outside the window of the café. Madame was already seated at the little table, and immediately it discovered itself to me that the eyes of her no longer held themselves upon the table nearer the center of the room, where big brutes laughed over their wine. The eyes of Madame looked yearningly into the eyes of her husband.

"I embraced myself with joy and approached nearer the window. Then it was that I for the first time saw the face of Madame's *vis-à-vis*. Dear God! The eyes of Madame, which were now once again like sad stars through brown October foliage, indeed gazed hungrily into the indifferent eyes of the man with whom she dined, but that big brute was not the husband of Madame.

"Suddenly once more I had shabbiness, hunger, thirst. I turned myself away from the window, wiping the tears from my eyes."

Benedict has never been good-tempered, and walking to crossroads for gasoline never improves anybody's disposition. When I was about to seat myself in the car, Benedict, who was wiping his hands on a newspaper, looked at the lighted window of the road house where the waiter's delicate profile was framed, and smiled.

"Oh, there's little Jean! Once Jean was at the top, but drink put him to the bad."



HALF the world doesn't know what excuse the other half has for living.

THE DAYS OF MAN

By TERRELL LOVE HOLLIDAY

MAN born of woman is of few days—days full of women.

In his infancy, women trot him upon their knees when he wisheth to lie in his cradle and think. They give him hugs and kisses when he thirsteth for milk. And lo, when he hath grown lusty and strong and his soul craveth caresses, they give him the merry ha-ha!

In the days of his childhood he riseth to be spanked by a nurse. At eventide he sayeth his prayers in the shadow of a slipper upheld by the hand that rocketh the cradle.

The days of his youth are darkened because *many* women give him the mitten; and the years of his manhood are embittered because *one* woman did *not*.

He goeth forth in the morning—to be sued for breach of promise.

At high noon, still a man though sadly harried, he seeketh refuge on the altar; and behold, he emergeth from the sanctuary but the half of a woman.

He seeketh his bed at night, and lo, how the woman with the serpent's tongue stingeth his ear!

He acquireth a mistress by marriage, and loseth her by divorce.

By toil he accumulateth a pile, and hath it halved by alimony. This he repeateth many times until he thinketh: "Verily, it were better to wed a rich grass widow and feed upon the succulent green herbage all the days of my life."

But lo, the widest pasture hath a fence, which soon becometh an offense.

Like a caged game cock, he panteth for freedom—and fieth the coop.

He soareth in his aeroplane, and falleth into a rocky place and the last sleep with his aviation boots upon his feet.

As a millionaire grass widower hath he died. And behold, four widows fight over his estate!

For verily, yea, verily, full of women are a man's days—and then some.



ROMANCE

"IT seems she did something rather odd—wedded her first love or some such silly thing."

"No. It was far more remarkable—loved her first wedded."



THERE is but one thing worse than ignorance, and that is incorrect knowledge.

THE STRATEGISTS

By ELLEN DUVALL

THE occasion was obviously less that of grief than of just the proper funeral decorum. It spoke in the bowed shutters, the darkened rooms, the cautious tread and the subdued voices. Nevertheless, the goodly assemblage of relatives and friends that awaited in the parlor the coming of the immediate family of the deceased talked earnestly and freely among themselves. They had certainly observed all due ceremonies, and now, at the request of Chester Penforth, only son of the late Benjamin Penforth, they were to attend at the reading of the will—always an interesting event—and so felt agreeably at liberty to discuss character and conditions.

"Well, fourscore is a ripe old age," said Judge Erneshaw, breathing lightly on his glasses and polishing them with his handkerchief. "He died with all his faculties intact. But then such case hardened men generally do," he added whimsically. "They come into life well preserved, and go out as they came in."

"It was a mercifully brief passage at the last," said Dr. Brand, the family physician.

"I'm glad, for Eunice's sake, he didn't suffer much," said Mrs. Brand, who was sitting next to Erneshaw.

"But Eunice is worn out, though," remarked the Doctor quickly. "All these years of serving an adaptation have surely told upon her. The old fellow wouldn't even have a nurse till I threatened to take Eunice away altogether—said he was too old-fashioned to have a 'female attendant' about him. I told him Eunice wasn't

too old-fashioned to break down or die from overstrain and want of sleep, and then he grudgingly yielded."

Erneshaw's smile—he was a spare, elderly man, himself—had a certain impish quality. "Yes, he was one of your literal lawyers, mighty in the letter, yet never able to grasp the informing spirit. But, as the oldest member of the Bar in Gloucester, and an honor to the profession, he'll be missed. That's why I'm officially here."

"No mortal man was ever more 'sot in his ways' than Benjamin Penforth," said Mrs. Brand tersely. "Eunice has been the best of daughters."

"She ought to have an aureole of extra circumference hereafter for all she has undergone here," said the Doctor grimly. "Deliver me from your domestic tyrants! And yet the old man wasn't mean, either."

"But could never conceive of any opinions or ways other than his own," said Erneshaw briskly. "Upright and honorable, yet almost impossible to work with. Such a stickler for trifles! While you were groping for the sense of a thing, he was all for crossing 't's' and dotting 'i's' and keeping up custom and precedent." Erneshaw adjusted his glasses, and his vivid blue eyes flashed over the assembled group and about the room.

"Repression, suppression, oppression—these three words compass the whole of Eunice Penforth's forty-five years of life," said Mrs. Brand with emphasis.

Erneshaw turned to her with a quickness that had somewhat the effect of a pounce. "Bless me, was it as bad as that? Such a nice little mousey wom-

an! Couldn't she have cut loose from the old curmudgeon?"

"Why, Judge Erneshaw—Rob—Eunice isn't little! She's rather above the middle height," protested Mrs. Brand in surprise, while the Doctor laughed softly.

"Well, that must have been the general effect on my retina and mind," said Erneshaw carelessly. "Suppose I've never really noticed her, though I must have been coming here off and on for years. Only came to the house formally, at long intervals, you know, and I fancy she must have been in the background."

"Yes; her father scared away suitors when she was young, and he always thought that women, like children, should be seen rather than heard; so Eunice has always been more or less in the background. Her mother instilled into her a strong sense of duty, of which her father has reaped a usurious benefit. Nine-tenths of what is held up as woman's duty and virtue is apt to be man's convenience," added Mrs. Brand softly, but with unmistakable edge.

Erneshaw laughed. "Are you trying to get a rise out of me? I'm not going to respond now; but you interest me in the lady. I suppose old Penforth has divided his property equally between his two children, eh?"

This afforded conversational entrance to Mrs. Josiah Cray, who had been seeking an opportunity. "Indeed, Judge Erneshaw, we all hope he has left poor Eunice everything. It's as little as he could do after the way she has devoted her whole life to him. And Chester doesn't need it; he's rich—to say nothing of his wife, who has plenty of money."

Erneshaw lifted his brows. "I hope he may, my dear madam, but, from my knowledge of old Benjamin Penforth, I doubt it. Two children would to him mean naturally a division—unless some crotchet should have induced him to leave his property to charity. He was curiously fixed in his ideas."

Mrs. Josiah raised her lorgnette, and

in her turn surveyed the rooms. "'Fixed'!" she murmured. "There ought to be another word. Haircloth! I haven't seen it since I saw my grandmother's parlor nearly fifty years ago. And he would have neither gas nor electricity, but used candles and lamps; that meant that Eunice had to superintend the lamps. And as for heating, he insisted on open fires to the last. Why they didn't freeze to death in these huge rooms, I can't imagine."

Erneshaw glanced over the brass-studded horsehair furniture, over the India vases and ornaments, at the sets of candelabra from whose pendants a stray beam of light brought forth the prismatic colors, to the old prints and pictures on the walls. "Perfect mahogany, and some mighty good things, besides the books," he said with interest.

"Oh, the things are really precious," cried Mrs. Josiah. "But his belief in the old amounted to an—an—obsession."

"Sh! Here they come!"

Chester Penforth and his wife and the two eldest children, boys of sixteen and fourteen, quietly entered, and were followed after a slight pause by Eunice. She mechanically put back her veil as she came in, and took the chair that someone offered. The way in which she slipped into the room and took that chair showed that she had long since formed, and had continually practised, the habit of self-effacement. She was a slender woman, with a pale face and delicate features; her mouth was pathetic, and she had the large, hope-strained eyes of one whose own personal tastes and longings are perpetually foregone. She was followed by Mr. Curlett, the lawyer, who held several thick envelopes in one hand. Curlett was a short-legged man with a stubby walk, and a professionally intent brow. He now stubbed across the carpet to the center table, and someone partly opened a back window shutter and let in an eye cheering wedge of light. Unconsciously Eunice turned her face toward it with a little sigh of relief, and slightly dilated her

nostrils, as if she inhaled hopefully the sweet waft of autumn air fraught with the pungent odor of wood smoke and dead leaves. Erneshaw eyed her critically, for people appear so differently according to the thought with which they are regarded, and he felt as if he for the first time truly saw Eunice Penforth.

Curlett unfolded deliberately one of his documents, and all prepared to listen. No one ever heard a will read without a certain thrill; and as all drew chairs a little nearer, and settled comfortably and stilly, the atmosphere was as rife with expectation as with the soft warmth of the smoldering fire.

Mr. Curlett read slowly and monotonously, and the kinsfolk and acquaintance listened perfunctorily, with eyes and thoughts fixed kindly on Eunice. Never did preambles seem longer or more unnecessary, but Curlett came finally to these words:

And, well knowing the clinging quality of the feminine nature, and the unstable quality of the female intellect—its judgment being very prone to error—I give, bequeath, and devise all of which I die possessed to my son, Charles Chester Penforth, with the proviso that his sister, my well beloved and cherished daughter Eunice, shall always make her home with him, and that he shall in all particulars suitably provide for her as becomes the birth and circumstance of a gentlewoman—

Even the stolid Curlett paused, as if uncertain in his reading, and the telling silence was broken by Erneshaw. "Well, I'll be—blessed! Consistent to the end!" The Judge was leaning easily against a window frame, with his thumbs in his pockets. He snatched them out and strode quickly over to Eunice, as did several others. She had half risen, and was gazing at Curlett with a piteous expression of deepening dismay. Chester Penforth was unmistakably too surprised to speak, while his wife was simply gaping in her astonishment.

"Why—why," faltered Eunice at last, "I—don't—understand! Will you please read it again—that about me?"

With a doubtful look at her, Curlett reread the ominous words, and Eunice

drank them in. "But he doesn't really give me *anything!* He doesn't—Oh, he doesn't let me be free!" she gasped. Then, as a fuller realization of the curbing nature of her father's provision came to her, she uttered a smothered cry and fell to her knees, as if beaten down by an unseen hand. "My life, my life, the things I've always wanted to do—he doesn't give me my life! Always the same arrangement, somebody else to think for me and to decide! I can't! I won't! It chokes me! It's not right nor just; I'd almost rather die!" She snatched off the bonnet and veil, as though they were smothering her; she beat on the carpet with her hands, then lifted them as if to tear the prematurely gray hair. The repression of a lifetime had momentarily given way, and nature *would* assert itself, speak and be heard.

"It's hysteria," said Brand sternly, as he and Erneshaw raised her and put her back into the chair. "She has been overwrought for days, and has had far too little sleep."

One brought water, and another wine, while Mrs. Brand and Mrs. Josiah fanned her, for her condition was pitiable. The scene was very painful, and everyone looked most uncomfortably helpless, as all do before the exposed privacies of feeling and of thought. Chester Penforth seemed fairly petrified by his sister's outbreak, and tears of mortification stood in his wife's eyes, as she murmured brokenly: "Eunice, of all people—that *she* should take it so!"

They soothed and comforted her, and after a time the tearless sobs subsided, and the shaking body began to sit quietly again. And then Judge Erneshaw turned pointedly to Chester Penforth. "A very remarkable man, your father, Penforth, and in nothing so much as in his prej—convictions. But I congratulate you on having the opportunity to do a very handsome thing. For, of course, you will so arrange matters as to fall measurably in with your sister's wishes. She is neither a minor nor an imbecile, and her life ought to be independent."

Penforth perceptibly stiffened, and

the expression of his face brought out the strong resemblance to his father: the prominent light eyes, the Roman nose, the long, yet rather flat and receding chin; narrowness, obstinacy, a gritty goodness—all the family traits, physical and mental, were manifest.

"I think my father's intentions and wishes should come before my sister's; and if he could trust my affection and integrity, I think my sister and the family connections may well do so."

Erneshaw's blue eyes spat fire. "An admirable reply, sir; eminently characteristic, yet hardly to the real point. It's not a question of your father's intentions, nor of your integrity, nor even of your sister's wishes. It's a question of justice. In the face of patent fact, such a will is absurd. As I said, your sister is neither a minor nor incompetent; why, then, make her a perpetual ward?"

"Sh!" whispered the Doctor; "even chivalry must be circumspect."

Penforth was anything but a dull man, nor was he slow to see an advantage. The flush on his face deepened, as he answered: "My sister's unfortunate—ebullition, shall we say?—would seem to go far to justify my father's—a—precautions. He and she have always been most closely associated; surely he may be considered the best judge of what will most conduce to her welfare and happiness."

At her brother's tone, and the word "ebullition," Eunice's white face turned, if possible, even whiter, and the look of sickening hopelessness made of her expression almost a blank. Erneshaw's speaking Irish eyes turned a jade green, like cold waters under an angry sky. "It is the paradox of life—some call it the irony or cruelty—that the selfsame facts will often bear entirely opposite constructions. There is such a thing as living beside people for a lifetime and never understanding them nor conveniently ignoring them. Some see only what they want to see, believe only what they want to believe. Do you suppose so indefinite a will can stand?"

"Oh, you're ruining everything!" moaned Mrs. Josiah softly.

Penforth's look and manner were very ugly as he returned: "Yes, Judge Erneshaw, even if my sister were capable of going to law with her only near relative— But she will not so far forget herself."

"Gentlemen, this is untimely," interposed the Doctor, determined to check the dispute.

"Rob, we love you utterly, but *do* use a little tact," whispered Mrs. Brand on the other side; and Erneshaw, quick-tempered and angry as he was, saw the folly of persisting. Penforth, too, bethought himself, especially as his wife, looking both shocked and frightened, had been making him imploring gestures to desist.

The atmosphere gradually cleared. People settled down or back into their chairs again, and Curlett was asked to proceed. The rest of the will was brief. In case of Penforth's death, the property was to be left in trust for her benefit, and at her decease was to pass intact to the Penforth children.

The silence that followed the conclusion of the will was distinctly awkward. Everybody looked at everybody else, and waited for someone to make a definite move. Chester's mouth was one straight, hard, ugly line. Erneshaw looked contemptuously indifferent—but then everyone knew that he was a privileged character, determined to say and do just what he pleased. Mr. Josiah Cray, with what Mrs. Chester Penforth always called his "enormous social prestige," turned his back squarely upon the room and began to study intently the pictures and the prints; yet the effect of that dorsal attitude seemed, somehow, to focus upon the Chester Penforths.

Eunice, meanwhile, in the high old haircloth chair, sat limp, white, wordless, scarcely conscious of what went on around her. Some thread of hope, held to through all these unselfish years, had either snapped utterly or was no longer vibrant. People came pityingly up to her, with polite commonplaces which she did not hear nor heed, and then passed reluctantly on.

The Doctor regarded her anxiously. Presently, turning to Mrs. Penforth, he said: "Eunice must leave the house at once and go with my wife. The strain has been much too great, and the shock of surprise is too severe. She must be removed from these surroundings immediately."

"I will take her to Atlantic City with me," murmured Mrs. Penforth.

"That will hardly be change of thought," said the Doctor drily. "Put on her bonnet and get her a wrap; I'll send her home with Mrs. Brand. Later, you may come to some understanding as to what is best to be done. Now, she must be with us to be carefully watched and tended."

Penforth made a dissenting gesture. "Really, Doctor, hadn't she better go with us? Surely it would be more fitting."

"Going to be responsible for a nervous breakdown, Chester?" asked the Doctor coolly.

But Eunice herself was regaining her self-possession. She raised her head and said: "For the present I will go with Mrs. Brand, Cousin Susie. Then—I can think."

Chester and his wife were evidently both surprised and mortified. "Why, Eunice," he exclaimed, "you can surely trust me. You will always have your own way, except in those matters in which my better judgment shall supervene."

She looked at him for a moment in silence, looked him through, then said gently: "Would *you* be satisfied with such a will? You know you wouldn't. Then why ask it of me? It is not the loss of any money, nor the reflection on my capacity; it is not anything of what you think; it is the awful lack of justice, which cannot even dream what freedom means. Come, Cousin Susie, let us go." And without another word or look Eunice rose and on Mrs. Brand's arm went from the room.

That will, of course, made a great stir in Gloucester. It was the unexpected that had happened, and everybody had an opinion and a say. Various accounts of what had occurred at the reading were soon spread abroad,

and, such is the gaily or tragically incalculable quality of human nature, that that little outbreak on the part of the self-contained Eunice did more to damage her cause with some than did her whole self-abnegating life to uphold it with others. To the ordinary eye it is the unusual that counts, and to the mass of men demanding that stones shall be made bread, on sober second consideration the will did not seem so hard. A rich brother and rich sister-in-law, unquestionably affectionate and kindly disposed, a more than comfortable home, with more than the traditional "full and plenty"—what could a reasonable woman ask further? Perhaps old Benjamin Penforth did know best; volatile woman, changing and changeable, flighty and inconsequent in her desires, had best be properly tethered. So the townsmen rather sided with Chester, and the townswomen with Eunice. And yet they admitted that her feeling was somewhat above and beyond ordinary comprehension. What did she really want?

Meantime, her close friends, particularly the Doctor and his wife, watched over her with some anxiety and no little perplexity. This is a hard and definite world; if she wouldn't abide by the will, and wouldn't attempt to break it, what was she to do? She was certainly not prepared to dig; to beg she would be as certainly ashamed; and yet one must live. How utilize the pretty inutilities of a middle-aged gentlewoman? Mrs. Chester Penforth came every day, stayed long and talked volubly of duty, proper mourning, family affection, wall paper, Atlantic City and "dear Eunice's extraordinary notion in wanting to live alone."

"But, Fanny," interpolated Mrs. Brand at this point, "Eunice never said anything of the sort. So far as we can gather—for she puts very little concerning her feelings into words—she seems to think that it was due herself as a rational being, or due to abstract justice, that she should have been allowed to arrange her life according to her own discretion."

"But, dear me, why can't she?" cried Mrs. Chester protestingly. "She will have everything just the same, if not far more. We live delightfully; we know the best people—almost all of them; she will always go wherever I do, and not have a care or responsibility. Chester can't understand it at all. He's deeply mortified, and is becoming quite morbid. It does seem so unreasonable. One would think she would acquiesce with pleasure."

"Not one who knew Eunice," said Mrs. Brand drily. "She has always wanted to travel, for one thing, and, of course, according to her own interests and desires. She wants to see, she says, 'concrete history and art, not the written page, the photograph, the description.' Old Mr. Penforth was as non-adventurous as an oyster, and quite as much of a stay-at-home. A few weeks or days in the city now and then represent poor Eunice's hoppings beyond the family roost. She has never been farther North than Boston, nor farther South than Norfolk, and never West at all. And it wasn't as if they had been poor—she, with such a thirst for all that this wondrous life of ours offers!"

Mrs. Chester's large brown eyes, with their vaguely uncertain expression, fixed themselves earnestly on Mrs. Brand. "But, dear Cousin Susie, I don't suppose Chester would seriously object. We've been to Europe several times ourselves, and surely expect to go again."

Something in Mrs. Brand's look checked her. Propriety, conventionality, virtue, were to Mrs. Chester Penforth almost synonymous. The habitual vagueness of her eyes was caused not by indefiniteness of desire, but by doubt as to means. She was quite sure that her desires were laudable, all the more so that they were shared by the world at large; but she was uncertain as to resources. The Josiah Crays, for instance, called, as in duty bound, once in a year or so; but they never came to her dinners, and most infrequently to her teas and receptions. What was lacking? Yet Mrs. Chester

was sure she was socially impregnable, for did she not dine late even on Sunday, instead of partaking of the simple, more primitive tea? Then as the granddaughter of a locally famous cabinetmaker, one of her unresolvable doubts was whether it was better to know a great deal about old-fashioned furniture or nothing at all. For knowledge come by elegantly, as a connoisseur, is one thing, but inherited inevitably by way of trade is quite another. And then, in her inmost soul, she could never decide whether a grand manner was the more desirable as indicating the greater exclusiveness, or—no manner or manners at all, apparently, like little Mrs. Dorsey Greaves, who, nevertheless, was tremendously followed. But now all perplexities were swallowed up in this burning question of Eunice—her strange stand and incomprehensible dissatisfaction. Mrs. Chester declared that her position was most anomalous, staying on uncertainly at the Penforth house in Gloucester, when by rights she should be at home in the city—and giving directions about Penforth belongings unhelped by so much as a syllable from Eunice.

Then at the Brands' she daily encountered Judge Erneshaw, who certainly poured no oil on the troubled waters of her doubts and surmisings. His exquisite politeness somehow made her exquisitely uncomfortable. Just enough of the Celt to have a trace of unhumanness about him, the elfin quality, whether of fairy or of imp, a spice of that malice which is not wholly averse from the caressing lick that neatly takes off the skin—his sympathy was deeply disconcerting.

"Unreasonable, my dear lady? Why, of course. But then aren't we all agreed that unreason is a feminine prerogative and charm? Leave unlovely logic to us coarser men. And if among gentlemen, you know, a lady's wishes are commands, then surely a sister's ought to be paramount. Oh, there's no compulsion, of course; just the inspiring authority exercised by a common ideal of conduct, a common understanding. I'm awfully sorry I

butted in, though—it must have been an Irish cow that kicked over its own pail of milk—but I was childishly disappointed. You see, I expected a pretty action, had set my mouth for pie, as it were, and got—this is in the bosom of the family—sawdust. There burned the fire; here lay the will; now what was to hinder Chester Penforth from picking up that will and dropping it promptly upon that fire? It would have cleared his skirts at once—so simple, immediate and direct. That was the way I romantically felt. Old Jos Cray and I were talking about it at the club, and it's curious that we should both have counted on the same thing, and should both have been disappointed. Yes, we looked for a pretty action, something to warm the blood; the kind of thing you might not have the grace to do yourself, but would love to see done by your best friend or a brother-in-law or the husband of your first cousin, something really to brag about."

With his malignly innocent eyes fixed upon his listener, and a voice and accent not to be excelled, Erneshaw was surely making an impression.

"Pity he didn't influence his father in the other direction, though," continued the Judge blandly.

But by this time Mrs. Penforth, concerned and tormented, had found speech. "Oh, Judge Erneshaw, you don't think—people don't suppose"—She faltered and stopped.

"Dear lady," returned Erneshaw in his handsomest manner—the manner most fatal to the opposing counsel's witness—"in a strictly academic sense, historians always, and lawyers under certain conditions, are not supposed to think. They are simply to state or to present facts. But I am human and empiric enough to hold that no one can state a fact without giving it thereby an interpretation. The will gives everything to Chester. Tongues have wagged, do wag, will wag, to the end of time. You are far too socially experienced, dear madam, not to be able to put two and two together. The will gives everything to Chester. I

leave to your own imagination the interpretation people put upon it."

Tears of bitter mortification stood in Mrs. Chester's eyes. "Judge Erneshaw, I do assure you Chester never dreamed of such a will. He was as surprised as anyone."

"I'm convinced of it," murmured Erneshaw soothingly, "but the world in general is not so simple and charitable as we are. Sixty or seventy thousand is a tidy little sum, and comes in handily at this time, when your good husband desires to make certain improvements in the Dorley Mills. I, as a shareholder, happen to know. It would have been so much better if he had burned—But, there, we won't speak of it further. Filial piety, and a due regard for a father's wishes are most admirable. Generally, such soul values are incalculable; but in this instance they are worth, aren't they, about seventy thousand?" His sighs, his pauses and hesitations, were very effective. "Ah, Richter is right; we never do know any man until we divide an inheritance with him or want him to divide one with us."

At this point, mystified and troubled, the lady rose to go, and Erneshaw bade her good-bye as if she were a client who had just reposed in him an unhappy confidence.

"You were almost—cruel," said Mrs. Brand, smiling reproachfully, after she had seen her visitor out.

"I must 'be cruel only to be kind,'" quoted Erneshaw briskly. "She's a mighty handsome woman, but wooden as one of her grandfather's fine sideboards. It won't hurt to inoculate her with an idea which, under Providence, may take. I trust she will think it her Christian and wifely duty to repeat to Chester what I said—possibly with embellishments. It's a point of honor to separate him from half of that money. He owes it to his sister in justice, and to me in courtesy for his manner the day of the will."

But Mrs. Brand's face was grave behind its smile. "After all, it rests with Eunice. No one can take another up

and support her. She must find her own way out."

"I fancy she will," said Ernest Shaw confidently. "Her strong feeling will crystallize into the appropriate action. I'm beginning to feel that Eunice is exceptional. But now that Mrs. Penforth has safely turned the corner, I, too, must go."

A few mornings later, when Mrs. Brand went into the large, sunny room where her kinswoman spent most of her time, she found Eunice with a more alert expression on her face, a return of the usual quietly compressed energy.

"I'm sorry to have worried you all so," she began earnestly. "No, don't excuse me, Cousin Susie, for as I look back I see I might have known. The will was perfectly consistent and characteristic, and my poor father thought he was doing it for the best. I don't question his affection. I didn't know I had hoped so strongly and deeply all these years, however—such poor little starved hopes—till I saw them all drowning like blind kittens in a water butt, the day of the will. Well, it's over. Only, I don't forgive myself for the unseemly scene I made, and for the anxiety I have caused you all." There was even a trace of the old sub-surface humor now, together with the customary bravery which had faced every exigency of life with patient cheerfulness.

"Sit in that comfortable, chintz-covered chair, Cousin Susie, and listen. Don't interrupt me till I've finished, and then tell me frankly what you think. Let's dispassionately inventory Eunice Penforth, and see what she's good for." She drew a long breath, and said more gravely: "I want to be my own guardian, under God, till my life's end. I consider the desire perfectly legitimate and just. Chester and Fanny would be as fair to me as they know how, and generous. I should have purple and fine linen, the best of food and warmth, the utmost of physical comfort. I should be at liberty to run up bills, perhaps, under certain re-

strictions, unless Fanny, which is more likely, attended to all my clothes; but I should have scarcely a cent of spending money, and my very time would be largely mapped out for me. Shall I sell my birthright of approximate freedom—which presupposes work of some kind—for the mess of pottage?"

She paused for a moment before adding: "Then, their ways and thoughts are not mine, and their plane of life is different from that I should like to occupy. But I'm forty-five, and have been bred up to nothing in particular—just a lady. I read French and German a little, can keep accounts, play the piano a little—Beethoven's waltzes and the schoolgirl things of years ago; nothing possible there, I fancy. But you know my father's—a—rigidities of opinion, how, without realizing it, he was—hard to please. Servants came and went, and I trained them all. There is nothing about a house I don't know and cannot do. If I do say it myself, I'm a perfect cook. There lies my marketable ability, my likelihood of trade. All the world's a mart, and all the men and women merely traders. It depends on what you trade with and for, you'll say." She smiled, and took a rapid turn through the room. "There are places in the city, tea or lunch rooms, some of them conducted by women, where I might find an opening, subordinate at first, of course, to learn practical details, yet with possibilities, dependent upon my business capacity, beyond—working housekeeper, managing cook, something of that sort. In this way I shall still own myself, shall still have the blessed privilege of hope, and after a time, may yet be able to see and to do some things to my own liking."

Eunice's clear, pale face had been undergoing many subtle changes of expression, as if the spirit within breathed lightly upon a delicate pane. But the changes in Mrs. Brand's countenance were far stronger and more marked; first, shocked wonder, then suspense, then an almost incredulous, repressed joy.

"Eunice, you! Would you really dare?"

Eunice regarded her with mild surprise. "Certainly; it's the one thing I can do thoroughly. Why shouldn't I turn it to account? And if, to all your lifelong kindness, you will add that of getting me a place—more elegantly, securing me a position, I shall be so grateful. Not 'lady help,' mind; just the plain, everyday thing. I've thought it all out; it will be a new experience, and I rather enjoy the prospect of seeing life from a below stairs point of view."

Mrs. Brand listened keenly to all her kinswoman had to say, but in replying she herself said very little. On leaving the room, she called up Erneshaw and asked him to come to dinner, and to come early. He came, expectant to the finger tips, as was evident when he shook hands.

"Your very voice over the 'phone intimated new developments; what is it?" he asked eagerly.

"I've been dying to tell someone all day. Frank's away. Rob, she has thought of a way out; she's going to cook!" Mrs. Brand was breathless.

"Wha—at?" gasped Erneshaw, staring.

"And if she had thought the world over she couldn't have hit upon a more perfect plan. Don't blink at me, Rob Erneshaw; grasp the situation. Eunice Penforth is going, if necessary, to cook!"

They gazed at each other in silence and presently the mundane joy of her face was matched by the impish glee of his.

"Eunice? And she thought of it herself? What a train of possibilities! Oh, the simplicity that confounds wisdom! And here we've cudgeled our brains, till I, for one, haven't any brains left. Susie, will you look me straight in the eye and swear you never offered a breath of suggestion? We began life on the same school bench together, and, from the alphabet on, you've been a subtle-minded person."

"No more than yourself. But I swear it—cross my heart; I never

dreamed of such a thing. And I wouldn't have suggested it, if I had. Eunice is too high and too humble, too generous and too fine, to stoop to devices. Moreover, she is thinking kindly of her father, is justifying him to herself and to others. She has put the hard past and present disappointment behind her, and is quietly facing the future. No," continued Mrs. Brand earnestly, "I was almost afraid to speak for fear of spoiling her ingenuousness and simplicity. She's essentially young, Rob, despite her forty-five years."

"Undoubtedly, since the power of initiative means youth." Then, regarding his lifelong friend sympathetically: "But I might have known you, Susie. Thucydides has a noble passage about only great hearts respecting and understanding simplicity; you, too, are fine. Yet, it's the best I ever heard. And that she should have thought of it herself! Is that thirty thousand I see before me?"—plucking an imaginary something out of the air. "Yes, I think it is."

Their two-part laughter filled the room.

"And I know the person who shall hire Miss Eunice, a person provided by destiny to fill the part," continued Erneshaw. "It's Mrs. Dillwyn. She has a café or lunch room for saleswomen and clerks that she's trying to run on philanthropic principles. But there's too much theory, too much sentiment and too little human nature. Her iridescent bubble is bound to burst, but meantime she wants a combination of all virtue and ability to blow it, and she has had the mischief with her employees. Dillwyn says he's kept alive by watching his wife's experiments. She weighs two hundred, and has no waist line even in fifty-dollar stays—"

"Be careful!" interpolated Mrs. Brand.

"Don't squirm before you hear. I never verbally fall overboard—"

"Except the day of the will."

"Well, hardly ever. Anyhow, Mrs. Dillwyn will serve our turn. Her mind has no waist line, either; indeed, her mental condition is always nebulous,

but full of loving heat and energy. She's more innocent than Eunice herself, and she's always mothering a person or a cause. And when she espouses a cause, oh, the momentum of it! All you have to do is to sit back and get a free ride. The explanation ought to satisfy everyone; that Eunice has too much respect for her father's memory, and too much affection for her brother, to dispute the will, but too much self-respect to accept it. How does that strike you?"

"Rob, you're an angel."

"But our unwitting silent partner will do the trick. She is our strongest card."

"Our 'silent partner'!"

"Mrs. Chester Penforth herself. Again the simple will confound the wise, the lesser motive prove mightier than the finer. Alas, for human nature! I'll engage to hoist Chester with his own wife, quite as effectually as the engineer with his own petard. Wait and you'll see what you will see."

"Sh! Here comes Eunice," said Mrs. Brand hurriedly. "Don't give us away."

It was about three weeks after this that Mrs. Penforth, sitting at her handsomely appointed breakfast table, began slowly to open her morning's mail. The admirable Hooper, whose clean blackness was thrown into high relief by his white duck morning coat, had just presented it on the little silver tray, with the ivory paper cutter laid carefully on top. Mrs. Penforth's ample brow was not only serious, but even showed signs of care. She had been at home more than a fortnight, yet was still "in the dark," as she expressed it, concerning Eunice's possible movements. One thing seemed certain, and that was that Eunice did not intend to take up her residence either temporarily or permanently with her family. And the few affectionate short notes which she had written were as noncommittal as had been the desultory interviews.

"She evidently means to make her own arrangements, and to carry out

her own ideas, whatever they may be," Mrs. Penforth would repeatedly say to her husband. "And as time goes by, I feel only the more anxious. I really think you might have tried, Chester, before you quitted Gloucester, to find out what would have satisfied her, and what it was she wanted. For people are talking; there's no doubt about that."

"Let them talk!" said Chester shortly. "There's no earthly reason why she shouldn't abide by our father's will. I'm only left the property provided I provide properly for her—which would have been done, of course, under any circumstances. But the truth is, Eunice is opinionated, like most women, and obstinate, like all the Penforths."

"I think you're mistaken," returned his wife mildly; "but, at all events, *my* peace of mind ought to be considered. You said yourself that old Jos Cray"—she had been quick to adopt Erneshaw's familiar phrase—"scarcely took a dog's notice of you now at the club; yet before this he was always perfectly civil. I'm uneasy, Chester."

"Jos Cray, pshaw! The Penforths are as good as the Crays any day, and better, too. Old fossil!" muttered Chester; but he reddened under his golf tan—his wife made him play, and made him belong to the Country Club—and then added: "Erneshaw's capable of putting him up to anything."

"It's no use to fight public opinion, Chester," said his wife firmly. "And it's much better to be generous sometimes than to be merely just—I can see that."

Chester truly liked and admired his wife. She was a fine administrator; she had ten thousand a year in her own right, and she was wholesomely devoted to him and to the children. He and she were good friends, good comrades—in so far as they were capable of *camaraderie*, and he knew, as a sober and significant fact, that he had always profited by taking her suggestions and advice.

As she opened her mail he watched her with a pleased, proprietary satisfaction. She always looked well; she

did things with ease and aptness; and with one plump white hand poised with the paper cutter and the other holding the open sheet over which her eyes began to glance, she was a becoming wife for any man, and not many, he thought, had the like.

"Good Lord, Fanny, what's the matter!" For as he looked, his wife turned suddenly white, with eyes staring; there was downright horror in her gaze.

"Water, Hooper! Fanny—wine, brandy! Don't stand like an idiot!" cried Chester. But by this time he was beside his wife, holding her arm and helping her up.

"Come into the library," she managed to gasp, and, helped by him, she made her way thither. "Shut the door," she cautioned briefly, then dropped into a chair and broke into tears.

"Of all wonders! Are you sick?" asked the alarmed Chester.

"Read that," she said tragically between sobs, and held up some thick note paper. The small, rather indefinite hand conveyed no idea to Chester's bewildered mind.

33 VANDERLEN PLACE.
NOVEMBER 12TH, 1908.

MY DEAR MRS. PENFORTH:

Quite as the merest, veriest, matter of formality, and at the instance of Mrs. Franklin Brand, whom I used to know and whom I greatly value, and who is, I understand, a cousin of Mr. Penforth, and therefore, of course, a cousin of his sister, Miss Eunice, in whose unusual venture Mrs. Brand is deeply interested, and to be perfectly in keeping with the lovely and exalted view that Miss Eunice takes of it—I mean, her wishing to do the thing just as any everyday person would do it—a professional cook and manager, that is—conducting the matter along what my husband calls, "strictly business lines"—do I make myself clear? I write to ask you—it seems too absurd, for I am perfectly convinced that she is wonderful—whether Miss Eunice can cook; yet I know that this note is as superfluous as the word "for" before the infinitive. However, if you will just send me a line to make the circle complete, shall we say, I suppose all formalities will be satisfied. I, at least, am most fortunate in being the one to profit by Miss Eunice's independence and delightful ability.

Very truly yours,
JESSIE BARCLAY DILLWYN.

"What's all this drivel about? What's the woman driving at? How does Eunice come in? And what in heaven's name is the matter with you, Fanny?" demanded the anxious and angry Chester, mumbling and stumbling over the words and parentheses. "I'm getting just a little sick of Eunice and her tomfoolery. I shall wash my hands of the whole affair."

But the stricken face his wife lifted stilled his irritability. For the tears were gushing down her cheeks; she could hardly speak for emotion. Never in their married life had he seen her so wrought upon and overcome.

"Chester, are you doing it on purpose, or don't you really care and see?" she wailed.

"After all these years, and the way I've honestly striven to help you in everything, and to do the best for the children, to have this happen! It's simply fiendish! She's a real lady, and naturally wants to spare my feelings even if you and Eunice don't. I can appreciate things and people, even if you can't; and yet I never pretended that my family was anything like as good as yours. But I'm coming to the conclusion that there's such a thing as being too well born. Eunice thinks she's privileged to *do* anything, and you think you're privileged to *ignore* everything; you are both about on a par; while sensible people know there are precious few privileges coming to anybody, unless it's the privilege of making oneself ridiculous. Chester Penforth, you haven't the sense heaven gives to goslings!"

She was rapidly condescending to the vernacular now, anger being a terrible leveler; and never had the astounded Chester seen his conscientiously polite wife so thoroughly incensed.

"If you'll just tell me what it all means—" he began.

"Means! None are so blind as they who won't see! It means that your sister, Eunice Penfield, has gone out as cook—manager to Mrs. Miles Fournoy Dillwyn. And this is neither more nor less than a note to me asking for a

recommendation—a recommendation! I almost wish I was dead! It means ruin! And Dorothy twelve years old, and to come out six or seven years hence, her aunt, her father's only sister, a cook, or working manager! Chester, if I could have foreseen this day, and that you and Eunice Penforth, the pair of you, would prove such abject fools, I never, never would have married you! And you can stand there and glare at me as if you hadn't good sense! Did any man ever appreciate the look of things? But I shall do something, if you don't. I'll go on my knees to Eunice, if necessary; she may have half my fortune—all, but she shall give up this—this—horror! That sickening will—your father was an old tyrant, Chester; I'm awfully sorry I named Ben after him—has turned poor Eunice's brain, and has hardened your heart. I can never hold up my head again!"

And with this her handsome head did go down into her hands, and she became fairly hysterical.

The domestic upheaval was now complete, and the dazed Chester, feeling as if his particular life were rocking to its foundations, stood helplessly silent.

In individuals and nations it is ideals alone that count. Fanny's ideal was society. The entity as she conceived it did not exist, but the conception had had, nevertheless, a strongly formative effect upon her, and had made of her a very definite person. Like most American men, Chester, of course, pooh-poohed his wife's social awes and admirations, her aspirations and imitations, her whole social "scheme of values"; but he was none the less insensibly impressed by them. No one can live intimately for eighteen years beside a mind bent consistently to one end without being strongly influenced; and her distress now affected him as with a powerful impingement. And while no married woman with ten thousand a year in her own right is ever perhaps, wholly a Griselda, still, Fanny was an admirable wife. There was no gainsaying that she did her duty as she saw it, even if she believed that one

of her chief duties was the placing of her husband and children at the social summit. The Penforths, she felt, had never "made enough of themselves," had never thoroughly utilized their unquestioned advantages of birth and position; but, strengthened by her energy and precision, there was no reason why the coming Penforths should not stand commandingly in the forefront. She was a somewhat slow thinking woman, always grippingly serious, from hat trimmings to the catechism, but, granting the quality of her thinking, she was exact and coherent. She knew her social values, and Chester knew that she knew, and perceived that she was destined to succeed. If now, for the first time in a really benign and equitable married life, he saw in her a temper approximating to what might vulgarly be called a tantrum, when she at last lifted her abased head she saw in him the un-Penforth grace of humility. Deeply concerned, mortified and angry, he stood staring at her, unmistakably open to suggestion, not to say ready for guidance.

But eighteen years of married life must inevitably disclose weaknesses at which an indignant wife may safely point an unerring and disconcerting finger.

"Why, you yourself simply writhed under your father's overbearing temper; you got away from him as soon as possible. Wouldn't study law to please him, but went into business on your own account. And poor Eunice, after forty-five years of it, must be tied down for the rest of her life by this ridiculous will! How she must have felt! And rather than be treated like a baby, she's willing to become a menial—has actually done it! A pretty figure you cut, Chester Penforth. But a man always expects a woman to bear what he wouldn't dream of putting up with himself. You told me yourself that your father never allowed Eunice half a chance; that, when the young men used to come to the house, he would sit in the back parlor, within earshot and full view, reading, and would sniff and snort at the little noth-

ings that young people always talk about. Horribly impolite, almost vulgar of him, even if he was a Penforth. And yet he was one of those men who have a rather slighting opinion of a woman who doesn't marry! Thought that matrimony was a kind of gauge of a woman's ability; as if any idiot couldn't marry who hadn't sense enough to do better! But I intend to save your poor children from their father's blindness, and their aunt's madness. I'm thankful they had left for school before I opened that dreadful note."

She wiped her eyes, mechanically touched her hair and sat upright, preparing seriously to consider. Impressed, yet gloomy, Chester watched her. A woman must be tremendously incensed so to violate all her own canons; for Fanny, in her anger, had transgressed all the rules she prescribed in placidity. Fanny impolite, Fanny personal, was a wholly new woman to Chester. Moreover, she had not only been grossly personal, but her remarks had smacked of the very market place, and of raw, unsophisticated, humanity.

"Oh, I wish I hadn't taken things so for granted! I wish I had had a frank talk with Judge Erneshaw," she moaned.

"Damn Erneshaw!" cried Chester fervently. "You don't know Erneshaw, Fanny. He can shuffle human beings like cards. I shouldn't be surprised if he were somehow at the bottom of this."

But his wife regarded him with scandalized severity. "Chester, if insanity is in the Penforth family, it must be coming out now. You know perfectly well there isn't a woman in this city—worth considering—who doesn't simply gloat over having Erneshaw to dinner. He's over and above mere fashion. As somebody said—Cousin Susie, maybe—he's 'quintessential.' And you can speak of him in this common way, when you know, too, my feeling about profanity?"

"The way he cocks his eye at me makes me suspicious," growled Chester. "Oh, he's polite enough, with a

vengeance! But when he wants to shunt a fellow off at the club, he talks in a strain that makes you feel as if you were standing on tiptoe and craning your neck to listen. I tell you, Erneshaw is deep."

"Pity some others are not deep, too," retorted his wife pointedly. "I repeated to you what he said."

"Yes, and the chances are that he said it for that purpose. I'm not the fool he takes me for," muttered Chester.

"Well, I intend to ask his advice, and to abide by it. He's better able than anyone else to pull us out of this hole—I mean, save the situation. I shall telephone and ask him to see me as soon as possible. But, Chester," she continued solemnly, "it must be understood that the property is to be equally divided. Then matters may be righted. And I might say that Eunice holds extreme views," she added tentatively. "Any woman who's as fond of books as Eunice is is apt to have views—at least, it's taken for granted; and, really, some very nice people nowadays do make the queerest social experiments: her action might be given a look, a turn—" She spoke hopefully. "Chester, do I show—is my face—"

"No, you're all right," said her husband encouragingly; "and I give you *carte blanche*. Eunice's conduct is outrageous and most unfilial, but it can't be helped. And you'll be equal to the emergency." And with a consolatory pat on the shoulder, Chester quitted the room.

Mrs. Penforth's drawing-room was soothingly delightful, warm, luxurious, rose-scented, with eye-cheering but not too effulgent lights. The lady herself, none the less handsome for a pale face and a perturbed manner, awaited nervously the coming of her rescuers, as she mentally phrased it, thinking anxiously of Judge Erneshaw's and Mrs. Brand's help. They came at last, however, pleasantly full, it seemed to poor Fanny, of everything save the Penforth coil.

"Now, my dear lady," began Erne-

shaw, after greetings and explanations were well over, "let us clear the ground by finding out just what you do want."

Mrs. Penforth regarded him earnestly, while Mrs. Brand covertly did the same. For Erneshaw himself seemed somewhat tentative and rather subdued.

"I want," said Fanny breathlessly, "to keep Eunice from ruining the family; and to do it, Chester is quite willing to divide the property."

Mrs. Brand with difficulty checked a slight exclamation, but Erneshaw's look was ingenuousness itself.

"Then you know she is at Mrs. Dillwyn's?" he asked gently.

"I had a note from Mrs. Dillwyn yesterday morning," said Fanny somberly, in a tone that spoke volumes.

"And I have come as soon as possible in obedience to your summons," returned Erneshaw. Mrs. Brand fairly studied him. If he were acting, then his histrionism—the instinctive histrionism of the Celtic strain—was far greater than even she had ever suspected. But she felt rather than perceived a new element in his expression and bearing, something that altered him, so that she could not conceive either his intention or drift.

"Oh, Judge Erneshaw, you and Cousin Susie surely must perceive what a terrible mistake it all is!" entreated Fanny, with clasped hands.

What was the change, Susan Brand kept asking herself, in Erneshaw? If it were possible for so socially assured a man, he seemed almost embarrassed. She knew that his wit was like a shield protecting the delicate sensitiveness of the imaginative; and she divined that imagination, which is the true "second sight," and which in him had always so loyally and chivalrously served others, might at last be allowed to serve its possessor. He hesitated; he fumbled with his glasses; he looked speculatively at Fanny, and rather appealingly at Mrs. Brand.

"Oh," burst out Fanny, "if you can't help us, then we're lost!"

"Nothing so bad as that," said Erneshaw quickly. "But, to tell the truth, I had an—an idea, a day or so ago, which

makes me, myself, rather dissatisfied with the outcome of things."

"An idea?" asked Fanny hopefully.

Again Erneshaw hesitated; yet he was evidently recovering his usual consummate self-possession.

"Or an emotion—well, what a psychologist might call a conceptual reorganization of the universe."

"What!" gasped Fanny, while Mrs. Brand stared. Erneshaw looked defensive, challenging, defiant; a fine color mustered in his wholesome, lean face. He threw up his head and drew a deep breath. "Yes, I had an idea."

"What is it?" asked both ladies together. But Erneshaw swerved. "I don't see why it didn't dawn on me sooner, except that it's so hard to think of everything at once."

"Oh, do you ever feel that way? To this day I have it whenever I order a formal dinner." Fanny beamed on him from the happy level of mutual sympathy. Erneshaw eyed her. "I loathe mongrel thinking," he said mildly, "and why this didn't occur to me weeks ago I can't imagine, except that the mental habit of a lifetime must have prevented. But I've evidently been trying to interpret the universe in the mingled terms of emotion and of thought—an impossible feat, and hence have blinded my eyes and clouded my judgment." His tone was both whimsical and determined.

"But any idea of yours will be perfect," cried the delighted Fanny.

"And it's just what we should like," murmured Mrs. Brand.

Erneshaw's pause was so prolonged that both women gazed at him in wonder.

"I should like to marry Miss Eunice," he brought out at last.

There was not a sound. Fanny, speechless, could not trust auricular testimony; but Mrs. Brand, finding voice, exclaimed, "Rob, you're the joy of my heart!"

Erneshaw colored high, but stoutly maintained his mental and emotional ground.

"It seems an ideal thing to do, and also a sort of corollary, and my only

regret is I didn't think of it before. But it really matters little. Throwing herself thus gallantly into life, as a good swimmer trusts himself to the sea, Miss Eunice is—well, I really think I ought to marry Eunice. We shall hit it off exactly. She early took to Shakespeare by divine instinct; so did I; so do all good Shakespeareans. But reasons are nothing. The idea simply fascinates me, and I mean to carry it out."

The stunned joy, the awed radiance of Fanny's face, was indescribable. "Erneshaw—Eunice!" she breathed fearfully, as if afraid to link the names together, lest all things might vanish away.

"Exactly," said Erneshaw quickly; "and I expect Fanny"—this with his happiest audacity—"to stand my friend."

There were tears of supreme gratitude in Fanny's eyes.

"Rob, do you love her?" asked Mrs. Brand softly. But wit, the warder, was on guard again.

"But that I love the gentle Desdemona, I would not my unhoused, free condition"—No woman ought ever to look a proposal in the mouth, not even the one to whom it's made." He eyed his friend loftily.

"And what does Eunice say?" persisted Mrs. Brand, smiling.

Erneshaw's face underwent a variety of expressions. "Why, I haven't asked her yet," he admitted presently. Fanny uttered an exclamation of fright.

"I haven't had the chance," he protested quickly.

"And suppose she won't have you?" said Mrs. Brand gravely. Fanny uttered a cry of dismay.

"Won't have me? The dickens! I never thought of that!" exclaimed Erneshaw. Then, as the suggestion took full effect: "Why, it's impossible—after all my pains, after fairly sweating my brains out! If Eunice Penforth could be so monstrous as to fly in the face of Providence, of the eternal fitness of things, and not to have me—why, she sha'n't have me, that's all!"

Mrs. Brand laughed openly. "You

are all alike. A man may go down on his knees at the moment of proposal, but makes amends for it all the rest of his life by thinking he has done a kind and condescending thing. You've simply worded and witted yourself into love with her, Rob Erneshaw."

"It's not for mortals to know the ways of Eros," returned he with spirit. "Think what honor he will win for himself from a bachelor-logged creature like me. Two young things, by the pout of a lip or the length of an eyelash, he may easily net. But I'm a trophy worth showing. I expect my friends to stand by me. They'll be here presently."

"Who?"

"Mrs. Dillwyn and Miss Eunice. I suspected why Mrs. Penforth had done me the honor to send for me, so I straightway dispatched a note to Mrs. Dillwyn, asking her to bring Miss Eunice here, that I had something to say on my own account, as well as on behalf of the family. You must both back me up."

"Rob, you never in your life did things like other people," said Mrs. Brand.

"Circumstances alter cases," said Erneshaw. "Lamplight and the drawing-room will do quite as well as moonlight and a bower: it's the immortal youth of the heart that counts. At all events, I shall prove my sincerity—Here they come." And, indeed, as the door opened, Mrs. Dillwyn and Eunice entered.

After greeting Mrs. Dillwyn, Fanny folded Eunice in her arms. "Oh, my poor Eunice, if I had only understood how you felt at first, and had taken matters then into my own hands!" she murmured. Eunice smiled at her affectionately. "Chester is taking steps to divide the property, and Mr. Curlett is making out the necessary papers," continued Mrs. Penforth hurriedly. "Everything is to be arranged justly, as you and our friends would wish; half the property, including the house in Gloucester with its belongings, for there you were born," concluded Fanny firmly, with eyes fixed on Erneshaw.

"Thank you, Fanny," said Eunice simply. "I had an idea, when Judge Erneshaw asked me to come, that perhaps Chester would see the matter in this light."

"It was more for myself, though, I asked you to come," said Erneshaw softly. "I want to set myself right." He paused a moment, and, as Eunice fully faced him in a way she had, he continued, "Could you, would you, think of marrying me, Miss Eunice?" Then in the ear thrilling silence that followed, he added: "I leave to your own heart and imagination how much the plain and open question carries."

For the moment, in her surprise and sweet confusion, Eunice's youth flowed back, and touched her cheek with rose, her eyes with fire, her brow with light. After all, thought Erneshaw, the spirit is immortal, and the real condition of immortality is youth.

"Do you—don't you—ask me from—pity?" whispered Eunice, almost inaudibly.

"Lord knows! Probably from every motive, simple and mixed, that has actuated man from the Garden of Eden till now—all focusing in me upon the one thought and hope," said Erneshaw charmingly. "I never yet belittled life, nor did other than thank God for the ineffable gift of it: it is because I know you, too, love life that I want you to share mine—that is, if,

for this supreme feeling there are ever any such foolish things as reasons."

Very winning were his look, his smile, the way he held out his hand—Eunice could not but put hers into it. He drew it up into his arm, then turned his head over his shoulder, and said triumphantly to Mrs. Brand, "And you wanted to scare my life out of me beforehand! I knew she would."

"Oh, Eunice"—Fanny's rapture had no adequate expression, but she shook hands impartially, and freely used her handkerchief.

"Don't take the property unless you particularly wish it," said Erneshaw lightly. "I have much more than enough for two."

"Oh, indeed she must—more than ever now," cried Fanny quickly.

Mrs. Dillwyn, whose amplitude, and hurried breathings, and utter amazement, had till now prevented speech, exclaimed, "Why, it's ideal! Oh, Judge Erneshaw, I'm glad I live in the same world with you, for you do achieve delightful things."

"Rob," said Mrs. Brand softly, "there surely was one strategist we didn't count upon."

"Sh! Who?" asked Erneshaw, with interest.

"Your friend Eros," returned Mrs. Brand.

"Well, perhaps," admitted Erneshaw, with eyes resting happily on Eunice.



HAPPINESS

By SADIE BOWMAN METCALFE

WHEN Happiness treads, smiling, near
I softly touch her robes with fear,
Then fearing, hoping, trembling, go
By paths Elysian—for I know
The deepest pool of anguish lies
Within the walls of Paradise!

THE GENTLE ART OF OSCUULATION

By CARL HOLLIDAY

“**L**ORD! I wonder what fool it was that first invented kisses?” sneered old Dean Swift. Doubtless we shall never know. Haliburton declares that the art was never invented. “The kiss is as old as the Creation, and yet as young and fresh as ever. It preexists, still exists and always will exist. Depend upon it, Eve learned it in Paradise and was taught its beauties, virtues and varieties by an angel.”

Be that as it may, the farther away we journey from the days of Eve, the more assiduously the world seems to have cultivated the habit; in other words, kissing is a mark and a test of civilization. Before the coming of the white man it apparently was totally unknown among the Indians of America and the savages of Africa and Australia; but who shall trace its beginning among the peoples of Europe and Asia? As far back as we may go among these ancient white nations we shall find no age when this highly unhygienic practice was not popular. Indeed, Darwin attempts to trace it back to the habit our betailed ancestors had of grasping prey with their teeth!

Coming down to more modern days, we find Job speaking of it as a part of the religious ceremonies of his time, and it was known in the days of Jacob, whose corpse was kissed by Joseph. And how the passionate Greeks loved it is testified by many and many a line of classic verse. Think of Plato—Plato, the philosopher—declaring that in the act his very soul escaped from his

body; and note how modern the lines of Theocritus to his lady sound:

I would have been contented
With a kiss of your sweet mouth!

And listen to Catullus:

“Do not ask, Lesbia, how many kisses of thine can be enough. . . . As many as are the sands of the African desert, or as many as are the stars that behold the secret loves of mortals when night is still!”

This business of osculating became so popular among the Greeks that it is said many husbands, before starting out for the day's work, compelled their wives to eat garlic—a most effective preventive, we cannot doubt. The Romans attempted to be more cold-blooded and dignified; but what's the use in the presence of a red lip? They were, however, at least more systematic, for they divided all kisses into three kinds: the *osculum*, the kiss of friendship; the *basium*, the kiss of ceremony; and the *suavium*, the kiss of love. All of which simply implies that the Romans had three chances to our one. The ancients, however, were not in favor of a public display of the business; spooning was decidedly bad form. Plutarch says that Cato expelled the Senator Manlius for kissing his wife in the daytime and in the presence of his daughter, and while making the decree the ruler declared that his own spouse kissed him only when it thundered. “And,” he added, doubtless with a sly Roman wink, “I am very happy when Jupiter pleases to thunder.” You will note, as we pro-

ceed, that this Manlius was by no means a twentieth century husband.

This same Plutarch is our authority for the statement that Rome founded the now antiquated custom of wives saluting their husbands with a kiss. The women, after sailing many seas and reaching this place, refused to follow their husbands farther, and under the leadership of Roma—a “new woman”—burned the ship. Then, says the historian, Roma invented this pleasant method of appeasing the wrath of the husbands; and the remedy has been used with considerable efficacy until comparatively recent years.

Strictness was the chief trait of Roman civilization at its height, and no exception was made in the matter of a kiss. Only near relations might kiss the women of the household, and then only for discovering whether the ladies had been indulging in wine during the master's absence! It seems that as Roman morality declined, the average citizen evidently became overparticular about his wineskins and tried the test altogether too often. For many centuries, indeed, the only kind of osculation that might make a fair and open display was the *basium* or ceremony sort. The feet and knees of the images in the temples were literally worn away by the millions upon millions of lips that had pressed them; the returning victor was welcomed with a kiss; the Senate and the arena saw beard touch beard. These ceremonious Latins saluted the gods and the rulers by kissing and extending both hands and bending the knee, and even the charioteer in the mad whirl of the race kissed his whip handle as he roared past the seats of the distinguished. And to this day we see these ancient marks of deference in our circus rings and on our vaudeville stage.

Now, how did we English speaking people learn to kiss? A Friesland tradition says that the poor, benighted British knew of the thing only by reputation until Rowena, daughter of the Danish invader Hengist, came among them, “pressed the beaker with her lipkins and saluted the amorous Vortigern with a little kiss.” Were these

beef eating Englishmen loath to learn? Well, hardly. The great scholar, Erasmus, writing about the year 1500, speaks in these enthusiastic terms of their ability:

If you go to any place, you are received with a kiss by all; if you depart on a journey you are dismissed with a kiss. You return—kisses are exchanged; they come to visit you—a kiss the first thing; they leave you—you kiss them all around. Do they meet you anywhere—kisses in abundance. Lastly, whenever you move there is nothing but kisses, and if you, Faustus, had but once tasted them, how soft they are, how fragrant!

In the Church, kissing has played an exceedingly important part. The kiss of peace, for instance, at high mass has been called the seal of the entire ceremony. This is said to have originated with St. James, who when going to execution was so affected by the gentleness of his Roman guard that he kissed the soldier and exclaimed, “Peace be with thee!” Until about the beginning of the fourteenth century the kiss was really exchanged by priest and people; but after that date an *osculatorium*, a plate bearing an image of Christ, came into use, and in our day the actual ceremony of kissing is seldom or never seen. Long before this—about the year 800—in the days of Adrian I, the custom of kissing the Pope's foot had arisen, and what this has meant to many a ruler the world's history clearly testifies.

The nuptial kiss, with a meaning akin to that of the kiss of peace, had its origin in a most serious and practical church ceremony known as the Espousals. Among medieval people, as among some classes of Jews today, it was customary for the bridegroom and the bride to meet before witnesses in the church some days or even weeks before the marriage and there make a pledge of future union, and at such times a ring was usually presented by the prospective husband. Sometimes, however, the man was too poor to buy the ornament, and instead, presented a kiss, which was doubtless more pleasant and was considered a binding pledge before man and God. The custom of allowing the preacher to take a kiss along with

his fee had a very different beginning. In early Catholic days, after the wedding refreshments had been served, the priest always came forward and gave the husband—think of it!—the kiss of peace, and that gentleman passed it on to his wife, while, at the same time, the priest's assistant kissed the best man, who passed it on to the other guests. No wonder the clergyman had an assistant! As time passed, the preacher doubtless came to the conclusion that the peace kiss should be placed nearer the source of disturbance, and thus the wife came to receive the gift direct.

Many are the superstitions and old customs attached to the meeting of lips. All who kiss the bride before her husband does will have good luck for a year. If two brides kiss at their first meeting after marriage their lives will know much happiness. If a man of dark complexion kisses you, you will soon receive a proposal. The sex of the first baby kissed by a bride foretells the sex of her firstborn. If, in kissing a man, a girl gets a hair in her mouth, she will die an old maid. If you kiss your dead mate in the coffin you will soon remarry. If you kiss a friend, then another and then again kiss the first, you will give her or him bad luck.

Why does the mother kiss her child to cure the cut or burn or bruise? The habit originated in no mere desire to soothe by deception, but in the ancient practice of sucking poison from a wound. How this belief in the curative kiss has persisted! The records of the saints are full of incidents showing the efficacy of the holy kiss. St. May-eul kissed a leper's wounds and the man was healed; St. Martin, at the gates of Paris, kissed a half-dead leper, and instantly the invalid stood a clean and healthy man. The very bones of the saints when kissed wrought cures. How many a sufferer in medieval days gained strength through the kiss of king or queen or pope! Foolish it may all seem, but doubtless many of the instances of healing actually occurred, for what a man believes with all his mind and soul can seldom fail to affect his body. To kiss the dying was long con-

sidered a gift of strength to the kisser, and among the Romans the nearest of kin was supposed to kiss the expiring one in order to receive the soul as it escaped the body. To this day the same custom is maintained among the European Jews and at the death of a czar of Russia.

Have you ever waited under the mistletoe? It is an ancient Teutonic custom. Balder, the Scandinavian Apollo, was loved by all the heavenly beings save Loki, the god of earthly fire, who hated him as only the gods can hate. Balder, however, could not be killed with anything sprung from earth, air, fire or water, and was therefore perfectly safe until Loki conceived the idea of slaying him with a dart of mistletoe, which seemingly had its origin in no element. Thus Balder paid the penalty of Loki's hatred; but the gods, in conciliation, dedicated the plant to Balder's mother, Frigga, with the provision that it must never touch Loki's habitation, the soil. And now it grew to be no longer an emblem of hatred but a symbol of love, and all passing under it might kiss as a proof of good fellowship.

The President kisses the Book when he is inaugurated, and in some States the witness kisses it before giving testimony. The idea is older than most existing nations. The ancient Jews carried at their side what were known as phylacteries, small cases containing parchment texts from the Old Testament, and when making an oath touched or kissed them—or, if the matter were very serious, they swore upon the whole Scripture. The early English when swearing touched or kissed a stone, and even in the days of Shakespeare something of the old habit was seen in kissing the bones of a martyr for the same purpose. In that late period, too, there persisted the curious custom of swearing by a certain number of churches, and then going to each of these buildings, holding or kissing the door ring and repeating the oath. The knightly oath in days of chivalry was taken by kissing the cross-shaped handle of the sword; the host kissed the cup before passing it to the guest; in short,

whether in court, church or feast hall, the kiss was a part of every important activity. But after the Reformation all this was stopped in at least one country—Scotland; for there it was made unlawful when taking an oath to kiss the Bible, crucifix or any other symbolic object whatever.

Among all nations there is a tendency to allow certain days to become legitimate "kissing days." Thus in Russia during Easter anybody has the right to kiss anybody else, and it is said that if the humblest peasant meet a highborn lady and exclaim, "Christ is risen," he may expect to receive a kiss and the reply, "Christ is risen, indeed." Formerly in England, if a woman caught a man asleep *on any day*, she had a right to kiss him and to demand the penalty of a new pair of gloves. This, it must be admitted, was an exceedingly dangerous custom, for might not the entire male population have become afflicted with drowsiness? Even in this twentieth century in rural England the maid is supposed to grant her partners a kiss after each dance, and the shrewd fiddler, when he thinks he has fiddled enough, gives a timely reminder by making his instrument squeak out the tones, "Kiss her." But, after all, what custom can equal that of rural Norway, where, after the inn maid has seen you safely tucked into your bed, she bends over you and gives with full red lips an honest, unabashed, far heard smack?

Of course, when a practice is as old as kissing, many proverbs gather about it. Says the Turk, "Kiss zealously the hand you cannot cut off," and the Spaniard, agreeing with him, says, "A man often kisses the hand he fain would cut off." "For the sake of the knight," declares the French, "the lady kisses the squire." "Kiss me till I be white, and that will be an ill web to bleach"—so says the Scotch. "A kissed mouth is just as good for that," remarks the Italian, and the Roumanian adds, "With one kiss you win no woman." "Wine goes with chestnuts," says the wily Greek, "and with young maids a kiss goes morning and evening." The happy Italian sometimes exclaims,

"Kiss me; the Pope forgives me. Kiss me and I will kiss you, and the Pope will forgive us both"; and the same trustful nation beautifully described death as "falling asleep in the kiss of the Lord."

How many historic kisses there have been! From the days of Moses to the days of Hobson—but that is another story. Henry II, deposed by the Pope, toiled over the Alps, stripped himself and humbly kissed the Pontiff's foot. There was a turning point in history. His saintly wife, Matilda, filled her home with lepers and washed and kissed their sores, and was believed to possess thereby the power of healing. And what a brave kiss was that which Sir Walter Raleigh gave as he stood on the scaffold and touched the blade of the ax with his lips, and calmly said to the sheriff, "'Tis a sharp medicine, but a sound cure for all diseases." Charlemagne caught his daughter kissing his secretary and discovered her carrying the lover on her back from her home lest his footprints be seen in the snow; and the wise ruler then and there decided to become a father-in-law. Queen Margaret of France found the talented poet and the ugliest man in the kingdom, Alain Chartier, asleep, and before the entire court she kissed him and said, "I do not kiss the man, but the mouth that has uttered so many charming things." In 1169 Henry II refused to give Becket the kiss of peace, and there was another turning point in history. Nelson's last words as he lay dying at Trafalgar were to his friend, "Kiss me, Hardy," and Sir Walter Scott's last act was to kiss his son-in-law, Lockhart, and say, "Be good, my dear, be good."

Ah, what history has been created by the kiss! But let Charles Dickens utter the sentiment in his own lovable way:

"Beautiful and sad are many of the kisses scattered about literature and history. There was the kiss of the troubadour Gauffre Rudel, Prince of Blaye, who fell in love with the Countess of Tripoli only by report and pined away so sorely for love and yearning that his heart went from him, and his

life was dead within him. He took ship and sailed over waves to see her; and she, touched by the devotion, went down into the ship as it lay in the Bay of Tripoli with Gauffre nigh unto death on bed. As she went to him and took his hand and kissed him, the poet's love leaped up into its last flame; he gave her one long look, blessed her and then died—with her lips upon his. The lady went into a convent.

"Then there was the precious kiss which Margarida, wife of Raimon de Roussillon, gave her lover, the troubadour Guillem de Cabestanth, when she stretched out her arms and sweetly embraced him in the lone chamber. Oh, that kiss was dearly purchased, for Raimon, coming to the knowledge of all it meant, gave Margarida her lover's heart to eat disguised as a savory morsel. When he told her what he had done, she, saying that if she had eaten so sweet a morsel, 'would eat nothing more,' dashed herself from the window into the castle yard, and so died in great pain, but more happily than if she had lived.

"And there was Francesca's kiss, so sweet and yet so sad, so guilty and so

pure, when, 'trembling all over,' Paolo kissed her, and they read no more for that day.

"And there was the kiss which the queen gave the sleeping poet, Alain Chartier, and before all the court, too; and that other kiss—or rather many kisses—given by Marguerite de Valois to Clement Marcot, of which this poet makes such tender, boastful account, prefiguring Leigh Hunt's assertion that

Stolen sweets are always sweeter,
Stolen kisses much completer."

It is a great thing in life—this matter of kissing. We begin existence with a kiss, and we depart from it with a kiss; our little life is rounded with a kiss. "It is a God-given blessing," declares the ancient Finnish proverb, "that the mouth is never worn out by this eternal kissing, nor the hand palsied by the incessant pressing of it." Since, then, the old, old art means as much in this passing earthly show, let us all make the most of it, seize every occasion to practice it, and as we drink the last deep draught of life, be able to say with the poet:

Leave but a kiss within the cup
And I'll not ask for wine.



LOVE'S CONTRASTS

By WALTER G. DOTY

WE were engaged—oh, dream of bliss!
Our-lives-were-coupled-just-like-this.

But when we quarreled, the abyss
That () yawned () between () was () just ()
like () this.



WHEN JACK EXPANDS

"JACK? Why, he's one of the best boys under the sun."
"Yes, but you ought to see him when the stars are out."

TO M— (OR N—)

By THOMAS L. JARROTT

I SWEAR I love you dearly, little maid.
Let words in rhyme attempt to tell the tale
Of all the love I feel, though they must fail.
Vast ocean's waves are never wholly stayed
Except fond Nature does their strength confine;
Yet, for a time, man's work may bind the sea.
Oh, may these lines enchain my love for thee
Until it be encompassed round by thine!

Does M— (or N—), Dearest Dear One, ever guess
Each whispered vow, each passion-fed caress
And kiss I dream for her and daren't confess?
Reserve and maiden modesty despise
Love told too soon; I'll wait, and when her eyes
Yield to my eyes, I'll speak and beg my prize.

The letter accompanying this sonnet is published below; there is more wit in it than in the verse it is intended to explain.—THE EDITOR.

TO THE EDITOR,
NEW YORK.

DEAR SIR:

Droll as it may appear, when I was quite young I wanted to marry someone. At one period of the few weeks of aberration for which the infatuation endured I attempted poetry. Since neither my verse nor I was accepted, I have remained master of both. Necessity has overcome reminiscent sentiment, so I offer you the inclosed sonnet for publication.

A blank replaces the name of her for whom these fourteen lines were written.

It may be useful for youths afflicted as I was to realize that the blank may be replaced by any dissyllabic feminine name—by Maggie, Mamie or Martha, for example. It may gratify the curious to learn that industry will reveal the inspiration of these lines hidden in them; the initial letter of each line combines to form an acrostic.

Please address the cheque to me, as usual, in the care of Mrs. McGuire, my patient and long-suffering landlady. I am,

Yours very truly,

THOMAS L. JARROTT.

FOR THE GIRL BACK NORTH

By EDWARD MARSHALL.

STARIN proved to be as dashing in the army as he had been in the village life, while Thirsby, as a soldier, was just the same slow, patient plodder he had been at home. Starin in two years won the company captaincy, and gained a reputation as a daring and resourceful spy. There was little doubt in any of their comrades' minds as to which one's record would most please Miss Milly Dangerfield when the war was over. All the boys knew the story. She had told the two, just before they started for the front, that whichever came back with the finer record should have her hand and heart as his reward. But there was politics in military matters then, as there is now in everything, and she was bright enough to know it, for it was common talk that she had added, with that fine eloquence with which those war times inspired many men and women:

"I do not mean that rank attained, or lack of it, will influence me. I had rather wear a ring of simple gold upon my finger presented by a brave and honest private soldier who had never shirked his duty nor turned back upon the foe, than to wear a precious jewel presented by a general who had won his eminence by anything but gallant service, honest and unselfish effort and a patriot's devotion to his country."

Half the boys in Company I knew that speech by heart, repeated it from time to time, respected it and wondered at and much admired the girl who had been capable of making it. Milly Dangerfield was the undoubted belle of the whole section whence the company had come, and the work of the two men was watched, something

as a race for mighty stakes is watched by fascinated spectators. A curious, and, to all the boys, puzzling feature of the case was that the two remained through everything firm friends. Neither rivalry in love nor difference in rank had in the least affected that.

At length came days when men were weary, food was scarce, and those who did not know were seeing blackest signs of an interminable war, but when, really, the last winter of the struggle was drawing to a close. The company, part of a monster army, was squatted in the neighborhood of Richmond, waiting for the fall of the Confederate capital. Sherman had already made his march through Georgia to the sea. North of his track of cinders only Virginia and the Carolinas were left to the Confederacy, while, south of it, but Georgia's southwest corner, Florida, southern Alabama and eastern Mississippi were in the hands of the battered, hungry, but still gallant and determined boys in gray. Still, the Northern troops were not in pleasant circumstances by any means.

Starin was out upon a scouting trip. He had been absent two days longer than expected, and the company, especially young Thirsby, was much worried by his protracted absence.

Finally, one chilly night, bleak even there in the Virginia pines, Billy went to Lieutenant Watson, who, in the absence of the captain, held the company command.

"I've got to go and look for him, Lieutenant," he exclaimed. "You know he packed me back to our lines in his arms after I'd been hit at Gettysburg."

The Lieutenant chuckled. "And you're anxious to get even," he said understandingly. "But what have you to go by?"

"Nothing but just smell," said Billy ruefully. "All I can do is poke around and hope."

The officer shared his little store of food with him, and by mid-evening he was working through the somber shadows of a cloudy, chilly night, on a blind search for Starin. He needed no disguise, being already, as were half his comrades, clad in loot from Southern homesteads. The day of natty uniforms had long since passed on both sides. His plans were only general, laid on information gained in idle gossip with the man now missing. They included the small town of Castleton, some distance north of Culpeper, and an abandoned cabin in the woods where the spy had told of hiding during previous forays. The searcher struck into neglected fields after he had passed the Union lines, and for an hour sped rapidly along.

"Halt!" said a sudden voice. "Who goes there?"

Thirsby could see the picket now; he had been hidden by a tree. He dropped into the shadow of a fence corner.

The sentry called again, advancing cautiously.

Billy kept a breathless silence. To shoot the man would be sheer suicide. The uproar would bring enemies in swarms. He could only wait.

So, peering intently into the dim moonlight, the Confederate advanced, his musket at the "charge," although before he was abreast of Billy he plainly had begun to doubt that he had really heard anything.

When he had almost reached him, Billy leaped. One fist hit the Southerner's jaw; the other struck his temple. The man fell without an outcry. Billy dragged him into the fence corner.

"Clean knockout!" he thought happily. "I'll—ouch!"

It had not been quite a knockout. The Southerner, reviving, had sprung and grabbed his musket stock. Billy

seized the bayoneted barrel, trying to press the sharp steel into the ground. This would prevent his enemy from either firing at or bayoneting him, and make the struggle once more a fist fight. But he did not quite accomplish this. Instead, he felt the sickening pain of a sharp thrust through his left leg. This made him desperate, and he choked his foeman to unconsciousness.

It needed both hands and a sturdy effort to drag out the bayonet, and the pain and strain left Billy sitting weakly on the ground, perspiration streaming from his face. For a time he squatted there, lurching drunkenly, even in that attitude, but finally he revived sufficiently to bind his wound with his own shirt. He wondered what to do with his prone enemy. Should he kill him, thus certainly preventing his revival and outcry and pursuit from his compatriots? These were grim war times!

"Lord, no!" he told himself at length. "As like as not, *he's* got a Milly somewhere, and maybe he ain't got a darned good friend, like I have, who is also in love with her and is a better man than he is. I won't spoil a pretty chance like that."

He tied the man with straps from his own outfit, gagged him with his own felt hat and left him, pursuing then his painful way along the fence. He reached a road and hid while a company of gray cavalry went by, and it was the stiffness which followed this long inactivity which forced him to abandon hope of reaching Castleton, and started him directly for the cabin in the woods. There was a chance that Starin might be there. He reached the old hut after dreadful effort. Approaching a sashless window, he waited for the moon, then peered within.

It was a sadly ruined structure, with a broken roof. The mud and stick chimney was dilapidated; the door had but one leather hinge. He saw the fireplace at one end, a plank bunk against one wall, a broken keg before the fireplace. It surely was the cabin which the captain had described. As certainly he was not within.

Disappointed, suffering, exhausted, Billy spoke his mind quite freely in disgusted whispers. Then he entered stealthily. After a close survey of the place, which confirmed his first decision that it was empty of all human occupation, he sat down upon the floor to turn his undershirt into new bandages and redress his leg. "Flesh wound," he reflected as he worked and winced, "but hurts enough to be a fatal injury." Having done the best he could with it, he found that he was shaking in a chill. "I'm going to go clean under," he decided, "if I don't get warm somehow." He hobbled to the fireplace, and urged by his condition to take chances, built a little fire in it. Warmth he must have, and a fire in here, screened from outer view by the old cabin's walls, would be much safer than the smallest blaze could be out in the open woods.

Having found a little heat in the small flame, he gave himself to contemplation of his bitter disappointment. His fears for his friend's safety were acute; his hope that by a dazzling rescue at this time he might offset in Milly's eyes the other's deed at Gettysburg, had been more vivid than he himself had realized.

"Now, ain't it just ridiculous," he ruminated, "for us two chaps, that think so much of one another, to be loving the same girl! I guess he's won, all right! He saved my life, for sure, and now that I have failed this time to rescue him, I probably won't have a chance to even up. If ever we get home, she'll just fall straight into his arms for heroism. Darn him! If I just had him here I'd save him, if he wanted it or not! Then I'd be running nearer even with him, anyhow. I had such hopes of this trip, and all it has accomplished has been a hole through my own leg."

Limping about the hut, he considered it as a hiding place, and found that it had many possibilities. There was the space beneath that bunk. That caught his eye at once.

"I'd make him crawl in there if he was only here," he told himself, "and

then, if anyone came by, I'd lay out here and groan and swear I was alone. They'd let me go, maybe, because I'm wounded—too much work to take me prisoner, perhaps—and, not knowing he was here, of course would not look for him." This imagined strategy pleased him, and he chuckled. "Wonder how he'd get around a thing like that with Milly?"

A brief period of moonlight showed wide cracks between the floor boards. One of these planks was warped up at one end. He limped to it and raised it easily. Beneath it was a space quite ten feet long and almost a yard wide between two joists. He lighted a match to assist investigation. Then he got stiffly down and sat with his feet within the hole, considering it. Finally, with careful effort, he lay down in it and drew the misplaced plank back over him. "That would be the place for him," said he, emerging. "I'd get underneath the bunk and make him crawl in here. Even if they got me, I could swear I was alone, and they'd never tear the floor up on the chance I was a liar." Crouching, he examined every other plank in the old floor. "It's the only loose one in the place," he said. "Oh, if I only had him here! I guess he'd have hard work to better *that* with Milly." He actually chuckled, but the chuckle froze upon his lips. There was a noise outside. Undoubtedly some prowler was making cautious progress toward the cabin.

"Lord!" he said. "I'm gone now. They've likely seen the smoke from that fire."

He was afraid to raise the board again. He could not do it without noise. He peered fearfully at the black window, then at the half-closed door. Nothing but the night was visible at either opening. Cautiously he crawled across the floor and worked his way beneath the bunk. He had scarcely wriggled to concealment when a man came through the door. From the obscurity beneath the bunk, the prostrate soldier trained his pistol on him.

But the newcomer, after a hurried glance about, hastened to the fire and stooped above it, eager for its dying warmth, instead of searching for a hidden enemy.

A twig blazed up and the hidden soldier saw the face of the intruder. He lowered his pistol instantly.

"Well, for heaven's sake!" he gasped inaudibly. To his drawn face a grin came slowly.

"Ah, Cap'n!" he said genially aloud, without preliminary. "Warming up a little? Chilly outside, ain't it?"

The startled spy whirled with a leveled pistol, but did not gauge the sound as coming from beneath the bunk.

"You ain't quite got me covered," suggested Billy pleasantly. "A little lower, to the left. I had *you* covered, very accurately, for quite a little while."

"Billy Thirsby!" cried the officer. "It can't be you! Not you!"

"Why, yes it can," the private answered whimsically. "I came to look for you. We was a little worried. And I ain't forgot what you done, saving me at Gettysburg."

The captain said, for the five-hundredth time, that what he had done at Gettysburg did not amount to anything.

"Meant quite a lot to me," said Billy, "any way you look at it. Somehow, I never wished to die in Pennsylvania. Glad you ain't been wounded. We was afraid you had."

"No," said the captain, sitting on the keg, "but I'm half frozen and half starved. I had to hide in a fence corner since nine o'clock last night, while the Southern army passed."

Billy laughed. "I been doing quite a little business in fence corners, too," he said. "I've got some grub for you." He reached beneath the bunk where his knapsack lay in the deep shadow. From it he took some hardtack, a small can of strong, cold coffee, and, after a moment's hesitation, a dainty little package. "I brought these for you," he said, grinning. "Heat the canteen at the fire. Milly sent the cookies in the package to me. When I write I'll

tell her you had some of 'em." There was a hint of triumph in his air.

"Oh, did she send you some, too?" the other asked, without much real enthusiasm.

"Uh—what?" said Billy. "Did she—" He was annoyed.

"I ate 'em yesterday," the captain answered. Then he waited for his friend and rival to come over with the food. Billy, quite as plainly, waited for his beneficiary to approach and help himself. His wounded leg was wholly out of sight, but it made him wince now and again. The captain noticed one of the involuntary twitchings. He rose hastily.

"You're not wounded, are you?" he asked miserably. He would be sorry if his friend were wounded, on his friend's account; he would be sorrier because of Milly. He, himself, had not been hit at all, and this one would be twice for Billy. Secretly he had greatly envied Billy the bullet he had got at Gettysburg. Now, if on this plucky trip in search of him he had been hurt again— He waited anxiously for Billy's answer.

"Just a flesh wound in the leg," the private said complacently, despite a twinge of pain.

The captain could have sworn, but hurried to him.

Billy would not let him help to dress the wound till he had eaten. Just as the bandaging was finished, they were startled by the heavy booming of artillery a few miles away.

"Night attack on our lines!" said the captain anxiously.

"I was expecting it. It's the ones that passed me as I came down after you," said Billy carelessly, and, as he spoke the fire was answered. "We were ready for 'em. I'm sorry, though, for now you can't go on."

"Did you think I'd leave you here?"

Billy smiled triumphantly. "You'd have to. You've got information that they need." Then he added: "But you'll be as safe here as you'd be anywhere but home, I guess. I've got a bully place for you to hide if the Rebs come." He limped across the floor and

raised the loose plank slightly. "They wouldn't be likely to look there!" he said.

"But where would *you* hide, Billy?"

"Me? Why, underneath the bunk, of course."

"It's not as good a place. Isn't there room for two beneath the floor?"

Billy shook his head.

"Well, you found that place—it's yours."

"I came all the way from camp, and got a bay'net through my leg, to find that place for you," said Billy, with some show of indignation. "If I'd wanted to feel safer than I will beneath the bunk, I could have stayed in camp, I guess."

The captain was annoyed. This reasoning was quite unanswerable; still, what would Milly say, if—

"No nonsense, Billy!" he said almost curtly. "If they should come, you, being wounded, should certainly—"

The distant thud of hoofs throbbed on the air. "They've driven 'em back, our boys have," Billy whispered. "And they'll come along this road. *Please, Captain*—"

The captain was considering rapidly. If Billy had not been hurt, he would have forced him to a place of safety, if he could, but he could not struggle with a wounded man. The sound of hurrying hoofs grew louder every minute, and he was much distressed. He could scarcely go back home to Milly and acknowledge that, unwounded and already gainer by his comrade's bravery, he had let him, weak and hurt, stay underneath the bunk, almost in the open, while he, himself, had hidden in a place of real security. A thought occurred to him.

"Private Thirsby! Attention, sir!" he ordered.

It was a good trick, and for a moment seemed likely to succeed. With the promptness of an automaton, his companion pulled his heels together—three years' trained habit was behind that movement of his legs—and stood there, straight and soldierly. In another instant the captain would have ordered him to "about face" and take

five paces to the front, which would have taken Billy to the loose plank; but, half with disgust at his own stupidity in being "worked," and half with admiration of the other's strategy, Billy realized the situation.

"Oh, thunder!" he exclaimed, insubordinately relaxing. "You can't officer me here! You get underneath the floor, and I'll get underneath the bunk. You ain't commanding anything when you're within the Rebel lines. *Please*, now; do get under that loose plank! Why, Cap'n, it's the only way!"

"You admit it, do you?" said the captain grimly. "You admit that there's no chance of staying undiscovered underneath that bunk?"

"I didn't—no such thing," said Billy hastily. Then, absurdly, for he was smaller than the captain: "I'm too fat to get through that floor hole. I tried it and I couldn't."

At this silly speech the captain laughed, not merrily, but sarcastically, for the approach of the resounding hoofs had begun to make the situation pressing. "You idiot!" he cried. "What would Milly say to me, if I—"

He stopped abruptly. The words had slipped out much against his will, for they acknowledged the veiled issue.

"Talkin' about Milly," said the private quietly, "what would Milly say to *me* if I went back and had to say that I came out to save you and then let you rescue me? Please, Captain!" He paused a second, listening. "Holy smoke! Now, Captain, they're sure coming! Won't you please—"

There was no doubt that they were coming. The captain stepped up to him and put none too gentle hands upon his shoulders. His mind was quite made up. He would use force, if necessary, in spite of Billy's wound.

While the hoofbeats neared alarmingly, he slowly but quite surely forced his insubordinate subordinate back toward the loosened plank. He was as gentle as he could be, and this was his undoing; it gave the private his one possible opportunity.

"Oh, I hate to do it!" was Billy's

miserable reflection, before he took advantage of the chance. "But it's the only way—they'll be here in a minute!"

With all his might he struck his friend and officer expertly on the jaw, and brought the other fist to get him, as he fell, just back of the right ear. His exploit with the sentry had been singularly successful. He made this quick attack as close a repetition of it as he could. It was equally successful. The captain staggered and went down, as void of consciousness as the bare planks he fell upon.

Desperately Billy dragged him, to the accompaniment of the thundering hoofs, to the yawning crevice in the floor and rolled him into it. Noting that he lay face uppermost, he pushed the plank back into place with nervous, hurried hands.

"Mean, but not all selfish," he reflected. "He'll get happiness, and I'll likely rot in prison. He'll understand and make it clear to Milly."

The shouted conversation of the riders was now mingled with the beat of horses' hoofs.

Having saved the captain, Billy would also escape capture if he could. He scuttled on bent legs and dived beneath the bunk. The action wrenched his wounded muscles, and this made him faint. Panic seized him. The thought of putting up a fight—he had quite a little arsenal there beneath the bunk—possessed him for a moment, but was abandoned quickly. "I couldn't whip the whole of 'em," he thought, "and after it was over they'd surely search the place, and, like enough, find him. If I lay quiet they'll find me, and maybe go off then without much snooping around."

The galloping riders stopped before the door, and he went giddy with the thought that Andersonville or Libby soon would open for him.

Shuddering back against the wall, he heard the officer commanding the newcomers give the order for a search. The rattle of accouterments told of a man dismounting. The next moment from his hiding place he could see the

legs of an intruder as, flickering in an untrimmed swinging lantern's dim, uncertain light, they strode into the cabin. Sight of the interloper's upper body was shut off by the overhanging bunk, but Billy watched those legs with fascinated interest. They were clad in butternut jeans. Then, realizing that the light might glint in his wide-open eyes and thus reveal his presence, he resolutely closed them. Through their lids he still could follow the movement of the light, however, and presently was conscious that the man had set the lantern down. Unable to resist the impulse, his eyes opened for a moment, and with keen delight he saw that the lantern rested on the very board beneath which lay the hidden captain. At the very instant of the glance which told him this, the soldier stooped. Billy quickly closed his eyes again, but was discovered instantly.

"By jiminy!" he heard the searcher say. "There's someone dead or hid there beneath that bunk. Come out o' there!"

Billy did not move a muscle, but stared with wide, defiant eyes. He could have killed the soldier easily with one pistol shot, but that would have brought the others and led to further search. He watched the elaborately cautious man approach. He looked like a farmer in his work clothes, save for an old brass-buckled belt. Billy's lips were sneering but quite silent. The man suddenly surprised him with a vicious dive and grabbed his wounded leg.

"Ouch!" said Billy angrily, inadequately. "You le' go that leg! Can't you see I'm wounded, you fool? That leg's been shot! Le' go, you idiot!" The pain was sickening. "I ain't resisting, am I? Please le' go that leg." He crawled out slowly, sullenly. "Well, you got me, didn't yeh? Didn't think you'd be half bright enough."

The soldier backed away and kept him covered with his carbine. He made no answer to the insults. "You alone here?" he inquired.

"No," said Billy with deep sarcasm. "Just turn up that keg. Eighteen

men hid under it as soon 's they saw 'twas you. If I wasn't here alone, and wounded, do you suppose I'd let a calf like you take me prisoner?" He rose with difficulty to his feet. "The madder I make him," he reflected, "the less likely he will be to snoop around. You half-painted, cheap, tin soldier!" he exclaimed aloud.

"About face!" said the soldier, impervious to insult.

Billy whirled, as rigidly as his game leg would let him.

"For-ward—march!"

Billy stepped off, limping, with his hands up, toward the door.

The shock of his own capture was well over. He was thinking of the captain as he marched. He felt almost jubilant.

"The fool ain't going to search beneath the floor!" he told himself, and then said to the soldier: "All right, you toad—you—you hoptoad!" and looked back across his shoulder at him, sneering.

To his horror, as he looked, he saw the floor board—it was just behind the soldier now—rise slowly. He saw the captain's head and shoulders emerge cautiously. Amazed and terrified, he wished to cry a warning, but dared not. It was with astonished wrath that, in the face of this decision, he heard his voice say shrilly: "Oh, get back! Get back!"

His captor, thinking he addressed him, looked at him astonished. "What would I get back for—you?" he asked with deep contempt.

Almost as he sneered, the captain's clubbed revolver fell upon his head and he sank to the floor without a moan.

"Get underneath that floor now, quick!" the captain said to Billy, in a hoarse, fierce whisper.

"Not much I won't!" said Billy wrathfully. "Get back into that hole, now, you!" The whole maneuver had amazed him, angered him. Not at this last moment did he mean to let the captain gain in Milly's eyes the glory of unselfishness. "Darn you! I ain't going to have you caught—not after all I've done!"

Without another word the captain sprang toward him and hit him, much as he had hit the soldier. It was a night of knockouts. He went down, falling on the man upon the floor, and quite as senseless. In ten seconds more the officer had rolled him into the long, narrow recess, and had put the plank in place above him. Then he straightened up with a grim smile.

"Ain't you ever coming out o' there, with that there prisoner?" a voice inquired from outside fretfully. "Say, you Sam!"

"You'll have to come and get your Sam," the captain answered. "I know that I can't lick the whole of you, but Samuel has been put to sleep."

There was a murmur of surprise outside. The captain heard a voice say: "By jiminy! That chap's got the best of Sam! Wonder if he's armed?"

"Yes, I'm armed, all right," the captain volunteered, "but I won't shoot. Come in and get your Sam. I've taken out my grudge on him."

Outer noises indicated that a man was climbing from his horse. In a few seconds a lieutenant in full uniform strode through the door, an ugly look upon his face, a leveled pistol in his hand. The moon, long hidden by dense clouds, emerged, as if in honor of the entrance of a person so important. The captain's eyes observed the color of the new uniform and dilated. His hands fell to his sides in helpless, wordless astonishment.

"Well!" he said. "Well, now, if you're not—"

The plank behind him rose, as it had risen recently when he, himself, had pushed it up, and Billy's head appeared. Excitement gave the wounded man agility. He sprang out, grasped the carbine of the fallen soldier and jumped to a position just before his captain, with the weapon leveled at the entering officer.

Then, with an expression on his face much like the dazed look on the captain's, he let the weapon's muzzle sink slowly to the floor—a slovenly performance for a well-drilled soldier.

"For heaven's sake!" he gasped.

"Why—why—you're Union, ain't you?
Why—you're Watson, you are, of our
—well, for heaven's sake!"

Lieutenant Watson was the first to recover his self-possession. "I'll be damned!" he said briefly. "Well, Cap'n, and you, Billy, what are you up to, knocking out a friend?"

"The light was dim," the captain

answered, "and I thought—I thought—I thought—"

His voice failed utterly.

Billy squatted on the floor and hugged his wounded leg, but kept his eyes on the newcomer wonderingly.

"Why—" said he, "why—why—I wonder just what Milly's going to think of *this*?"



IN MY GARDEN

By LILITA LEVER YOUNGE

IN my garden there are roses, sumptuous roses, richly dyed,
Leaning o'er to spill their perfume in the fountain's crystal tide,
And a mocking bird enraptured sings among the myrtle boughs,
Calling softly through the moonlight to his shy love-stricken spouse.

But my heart strays from this garden, where a dreamy fragrance lies,
To a cluster of dead blossoms that is sweet with memories.

In my garden there are lilies, stately lilies, tall and fair,
Standing pure as vestal virgins in the dewy stillness there,
And the incense they are wafting steeps my senses in a dream,
As I linger, lost in reverie, where their pearly petals gleam.

Yet I'd barter all their beauty, white and dazzling as the snow,
For a handful of brown blossoms that were withered long ago.



WHILE mere Talent pauses outside the threshold, Genius enters in and makes a successful bluff.



THE man who draws on his imagination should not overlook to pin "no protest" to his draft.



YOU can turn a crank down, but he always turns up.

THE HIGHEST PRICE

By HELEN TOMPKINS

THE woman is a fool!" said Grier impatiently. He closed his firm, white teeth savagely upon the black cigar which he held between his thin lips. "I have no intention of dismissing the case. Why in the name of common sense should I be annoyed with her?"

"Why, indeed?" said the other man faintly. He was younger, milder-mannered, less aggressive than Grier, more apologetic in his bearing. Even his hat, the brim of which he shifted between his fingers, had a comprehensive and conciliatory air about it.

"It's this way," said Grier at last in an explanatory fashion. "You want to take a sensible, practical view of a thing like this, Gunning. That is exactly what I told the woman. 'I've no particular ill feeling in the matter,' I says to her. It's my client's money that the chap stole, it is true. But now the money is gone, and prosecuting him is not going to bring it back."

"I suppose there can be no doubt that he is the thief, eh?" said the other man uncertainly. If Grier had been less self-assured, he would have noticed a certain difficulty of speech, a certain shiftiness of gaze, that was new in the man before him.

"No doubt in the world," said Grier decidedly. "Why, he was found there in the office, you know. And what other business could he have had there at midnight? That's what I say!"

"You are right, of course," the other man uttered, but his face was the color of dirty chalk, and he looked at Grier curiously. "I only came to you because I promised Molly I would," he added apologetically.

"Well, it's no use in the world to talk to me. If I would let the man go at all, it would be for his wife's sake, of course. He wouldn't need anyone else to intercede for him. As it is—"

"As it is, you take a high, moral ground, of course," said Gunning abstractedly. If there was a thread of contempt in his voice Grier was too absorbed to be conscious of it.

"A high moral ground—that is just it exactly! It is purely a matter of principle with me, Gunning—as of course you know. If the man is allowed to steal from me with impunity, he will steal from other people."

"Molly seems to think—"

"Oh, I've heard all her arguments over and over. Trust a woman for that! They never seem to know when they have said enough. To be plain with you, Gunning, I'm heartily tired of the whole business. I'll trouble you to tell Elliott's wife, when she comes to see you again, that there is not a particle of use in appealing to me. I've fully made up my mind to push the thing. I would do it, even if I had no personal interest in the matter. If the man is not punished for this offense, he'll come to grief just the same later on. There's bad blood back of him, Gunning; his grandfather before him was a thief."

A dull red flushed Gunning's face. "I'll tell Molly what you say," he remarked, as he laid his hand upon the door. "She's pretty much cut up over this business, Molly is."

"Oh, that—as a matter of course!" said the lawyer indifferently. He had turned back to his papers again, even

before the door had closed upon his unwelcome visitor.

Meanwhile Gunning had stumbled out into the open air, sick and shamed and miserable. He had not dared refuse Molly Elliott's prayer that he intercede for her husband, although he had known all the time just what a soul crucifixion the interview with Grier must mean for him. He had known just how useless, just how worse than useless, would be any words that he could say.

It was bitterly cold in the black, empty street, so cold that the icy wind set Gunning to shivering. He paused a little reluctantly, as he quitted the pavement for the icy slush of a little dooryard. Drifts of discolored, melting snow all but hid the tiny cottage and the broken fence and posts about it. It was a little house, made up of rough boards, from which a rough stovepipe projected. In spite of the cold, only a thin curl of blue smoke was snatched by the wind from the opening of the pipe and flung savagely back to the ground.

"Come in," said a low voice as Gunning knocked slowly and irresolutely upon the door.

He pushed the door open with a sigh. The room in which he found himself was bare, and ill furnished. From its shadows a woman came hurriedly forward to meet him. She was young, and her eyes were as blue as the violets that the winter held imprisoned, her hair as golden as the jonquils that the first liberating touch of the spring sunshine would set free. She was poorly and shabbily dressed, however, and the man noticed that the hands, which she had clasped tightly at the first sight of him, were rough and red.

"Let me see your face before you try to tell me what you have to tell!" she said hurriedly. "I would read the news rather than—"

Her voice failed utterly, and her clasped hands relaxed. "It's no use!" she said despairingly. "Is there no mercy, I wonder—either in God or man?"

"There's none in Robert Grier," said

Gunning bitterly. "In God's name, Molly, why don't you make Hollis speak? It would be simple enough if he would only explain why he was in Grier's office between eleven o'clock and midnight!"

A sullen look tightened Molly Elliott's colorless lips and darkened her violet eyes. "Hollis was there on legitimate business," she said sulkily.

"Legitimate business! Good God, Molly—between eleven and twelve o'clock at night—alone?"

For one moment a faint flicker of uncertainty stirred in the woman's face. "There's no use discussing that," she said feebly. "I think I told you that once before. I am to understand, then, that Grier refuses to dismiss the prosecution?"

"You are to understand just precisely that," said the man mercilessly. "I have done my best for you, Molly, but Grier flatly refuses to reconsider his action in the matter. After all, I doubt if I really blame him. Look at the thing for yourself!"

"I have looked at it—until I am half mad," the woman whimpered, breaking down.

"Yes, but you've not looked at it in the right way. Listen, child! Grier is hard-headed, and instead of keeping his money in a bank in town, as a sensible man would, he keeps it in his office in a ramshackle old safe that a child could open. The day before this damned affair comes up he gets in about two thousand dollars—part belonging to him, of course, but the most of it belonging to a client of his, for whom he had collected it. He says that nobody knew anything about it being in his possession except Smith, the man who paid it to him, and himself."

"He says!" commented the woman bitterly. For a moment her glance and the man's met and crossed. And then it was the man's furtive glance that fell.

"It doesn't matter a bit, so far as I can see, just who knew about it," he said surlily. "The long and the short of it is that Grier, becoming restless and suspicious—God knows why—went

down from the hotel to his office—a matter of a half-dozen blocks. And there he found—”

“And there he found Hollis inside the office, apparently trying to close the safe, which, to all appearances, he had just unlocked, and the money gone! Where was the money? Hollis didn’t get it!”

“I have told you a half-dozen times, Molly, that it has been proven conclusively that there was another man in the office with Hollis—who made his escape with the money,” said Gunning harshly. “It’s no use trying to ignore facts, Molly. It isn’t so much a matter of money, you see. I would willingly put up all that Hollis needs for his defense. It isn’t *that* that’s required. He needs to put up a straight tale, one that will hold water, about his presence in Grier’s office that night. *And he must tell who was with him!*”

“He’ll never do that!” said the woman helplessly.

“Do you know who it was?” he asked pointedly.

“If I did I would not tell—without Hollis’s permission,” she retorted spiritedly. “I would rather face a long term of imprisonment for him, and a life of loneliness for myself, than to see him turn real thief or scoundrel!”

“Well, all I’ve got to say is that you’ll probably have a good chance to prove the truth of your words,” said Gunning. “I’ve done all that I could, Molly—and I’ve done it for you, not for Hollis. I’d see him rot in jail before I would turn my hand over to help him!”

The woman had turned before he ceased speaking, turned so that he could see only the hunched shoulders, that had once been so erect, and the thin, half-starved profile that was as clear cut as a cameo. She did not speak to him again, nor even turn, until she heard the door clang noisily behind him as he went away.

After he had gone, however, the last man who she had ever hoped would try to help her, the poor, discouraged little woman broke down utterly. If she knew more than the public knew of the

reasons for her husband’s presence in Grier’s office that night—the disappearance of the money—of the companion and confederate who was said to have accompanied him—his utter silence—love or honor, one or both, had set a padlock upon her lips.

So she kept her faith with the man she loved through the long days that preceded the trial. Molly Elliott had locked another secret in her heart, and that was the knowledge that her husband would never live to serve out even the minimum penitentiary sentence. His lungs were weak, and outdoor air and sunshine in his case were imperatively necessary. He had never told her the doctor’s verdict in plain words; she had never admitted her knowledge of existing conditions to him. None the less, she knew it, and he knew that she knew it. She raged like a mad thing with the knowledge of her helplessness, the knowledge that it was Grier’s influence that kept Hollis from procuring bail.

She never dreamed of making the second appeal to Grier herself. His words, his attitude, had shown her the uselessness of a second interview with him on her husband’s behalf. She broke down only once in Hollis’s presence, and that was when she pleaded with him to tell the truth.

“You are no thief, dear,” she said with her arms around him.

The boy—he was little else, after all—tightened his gaunt arms around her and touched her face with his jail-fevered lips. “You have trusted me, Molly, when other people doubted,” he said in a low voice. “I owe it to you—I have thought of it much during the long days that I have been here—to clear myself in your loving eyes.”

“You need not dream that I doubt you,” she said proudly, and her eyes flashed.

“Perhaps not. Perhaps if I thought that you did doubt me, the very thought would render explanation impossible. Gunning told me—he has been here to see me more than once; although he is no friend of mine—that Grier said that my grandfather was a

thief. He lied, Molly! Isaac Elliott was no thief! Grier brought the charge against him, it is true. He owed Grier money—that was the year before you and I were married, you know—which he claimed to have paid. Grier was young and cocksure of his position, while my grandfather was old and a little unsettled in mind. Grier carried the thing to the courts, as he could very well afford to do, but the case was never settled. My grandfather died intestate while the suit was pending. But Grier has followed me with his malice and hatred ever since."

He paused for a moment. "All this happened nearly three years ago, Molly," he said wearily. "Last week I received an anonymous letter, saying that Grier held the old man's receipt—that it was in a compartment of his safe in his office. I know just how reckless the whole thing must appear now, dear, and I realize that someone used me for a purpose and made a tool of me."

She looked at him wistfully. "Who was it, Hollis?" she asked breathlessly. "Do you suspect—"

The boy's eyes wavered and then fell before her own. "I think that I know who wrote that letter, Molly," he said more hurriedly. "The devilish part about the whole thing is—"

"What?" she asked eagerly, but his face had grown dark and gloomy again.

"I cannot tell you," he said moodily. "It is someone whom I am not going to have drawn into this unspeakable mess, if I can help it. I burned the note, thank God! Only there is one thing, little girl: if I am sent up, for God's sake go away somewhere—where you are not known!"

"Why?" she asked again innocently, but his face had grown gloomy and hard again, and one of the old sullen, stubborn fits was upon him. "I don't want to talk about it again, Molly," he said fretfully. "It only upsets me and does no good. If the letter was written for a purpose, the man who wrote it got the money before I reached the office. I played directly into his hands, like an infernal idiot. I re-

member now that, when I first went inside the office that night, there was a smell of hot tallow. Someone had just blown the candle out when he heard my step on the pavement outside. I never even suspected it then. I never suspected anything wrong until after I had opened the safe—"

"There must be some way out of it, Hollis!" she cried passionately, as she clung to him.

"If there is I cannot find it," retorted the prisoner moodily. "And please don't send Lloyd Gunning here to see me again, Molly! He hates me and I hate him. He does not even make an effort to hide his dislike for me."

She sighed. "He is just—if not merciful," she said despairingly. "You have always misjudged Lloyd, Hollis. He may not like you, but he would shed his blood, drop by drop, to save me from pain."

But, stolid and emotionless now, the prisoner only looked at her grimly. Molly had better have married Lloyd when she had the chance, he told himself miserably, as the prison door closed between them again, shutting the violets out into a bleaker winter than Southern climate ever knew.

In the meantime Grier apparently went on his equable, monotonous way undisturbed. The Grand Jury met in due time, and Hollis Elliott was indicted for burglary. By the most superhuman efforts, his wife was able to have the trial postponed to an adjourned term of court, to be held near the middle of June. It was then the tenth of May.

"There is nothing else that can be done for him," said Gunning brutally the day before that set for the trial. "It's all nonsense, Molly—that cock and bull story that Hollis tells about the anonymous letter. According to his theory, the man who wrote that letter is the man who stole the money. If he could produce that epistle now—"

"He says that he destroyed it," said Molly. She spoke in a crushed, hopeless way that hurt Gunning far worse than a blow would have done.

Gunning looked at her oddly. "Ask

him about it again," he said meaningly. "Listen to me, Molly! Have you wits enough about you now to remember just what I say?"

Molly nodded. Her face was pinched and haggard, her eyes faded and dim, like violets that the rains have drenched. "I can do just what you tell me to do—if it is to help Hollis," she said simply.

"I want you to go back to the prison, Molly, and I want you to tell Hollis that I said that, for your sake, he *must* remember what he did with that anonymous letter. Are you listening to what I am saying?"

"I am listening, of course. But it will do no good, I tell you!"

"Maybe not—then again, Hollis may not have destroyed that letter, after all, Molly. You go now and see him about it."

So the girl went wearily back to the prison. "Lloyd wants me to ask you a question, Hollis," she said at once quietly.

It was one of the prisoner's black, bitter days. From his window he could see the drifting clouds, the blue sky between, the sunshine and the June roses. "You had better marry Lloyd as soon as the law frees you—if death does not step in and save the courts the trouble," he said roughly.

She cowered almost as if he had struck her. "Does it help you—to hurt me so cruelly, Hollis?" she asked.

The prisoner's lips quivered. "I am a heartless brute," he said remorsefully. "What is it, dear?"

"Lloyd seems to think that the case against you would be less black if the defense could produce that anonymous letter, Hollis," she said.

"I told you that I had destroyed it."

"I know you told me that you did. But he seemed to think that you might be able to remember—differently—if you only made an effort and remembered just how important it was," she said innocently. "Do try, dear!"

For one long moment Hollis watched her with a look in his face that puzzled her. Something crept into his tired eyes that she felt sure she had never

seen there before. He turned away with something like an oath upon his lips, and stared at the window and beyond it, to where the floating clouds drifted, pure and high.

"Hollis!"

He shook her hand aside. "Don't touch me for a moment, Molly; let me think," he muttered hoarsely.

Her eyes filled with tears. There was something in his words—as there had been in his action—that she had never seen before. When he turned to her again, however, it was gone.

"I am trying to think, Molly," he said gently. "I got the letter along with some other mail from the post office that day, and we walked out into the orchard—where the apple trees were in bloom, you remember. I read it, sitting with you at my side, under the tree that you said was like a giant tent, with its sweet, pink blossoms. Do you remember?"

She knitted her brows. "I remember that, of course, and that you tore one of the letters up after you had read it. It made you frown. Oh, Hollis was that the letter that Lloyd hoped that you would be able to find?"

But her husband's face was black again. "Most certainly it was not *that* letter, Molly, or how could I even hope that there would be a chance to get our hands on it again?" he said peevishly. "You should learn not to jump at conclusions, my dear. That letter was something—very different! After that, you know, we crossed the field and came home by the path through the Harper woods. If I lost the letter, I lost it there."

"I am to tell Lloyd that, after all, you are not sure that you destroyed it then?"

"I am not sure—that is the way to put it, little girl; you have expressed it to a nicety," said the prisoner. He seemed to have quite recovered his good nature by this time. But she noticed, with a little sinking of the heart, that he still looked at her curiously.

She repeated the entire conversation to Lloyd a little later. Even the vague

hope that, in some unexplainable way, Lloyd might be able to help her had worked wonders. A little scarlet stain made her cheeks like pomegranate buds, and her eyes were curiously alight.

To her surprise, however, Lloyd looked at her almost as curiously as her husband had done. "It's very late and I have a lot to do yet," he said shortly. "I'll look about on the chance of being able to find the paper where Elliott dropped it, or possibly at some distance from the path. The wind may have carried it away, you know. Will you be in the court room tomorrow, Molly?"

"I shall stay with Hollis, certainly," she said brightly. For the first time in weeks the young man saw a faint smile on her lips.

The smile was still in his memory when Hollis Elliott, pale and haggard from prison confinement, entered the court room next day with his wife beside him. Robert Grier was the first witness called to the stand. He told his story in a simple way that evidently had a very great impression upon the jury. If there was any malice in his attitude toward the prisoner, he was able to conceal it.

Hollis Elliott himself was called next. Gunning tried desperately to keep the dislike for the prisoner out of his voice, as he hoped that he had been able to keep it out of his face when he began to question him.

"Where were you at midnight on the night of the twenty-first of April?" he asked.

Elliott flushed hotly as the question came like a bullet from a gun.

"I was in Robert Grier's office," he said, however, without hesitation.

"Who was there with you?"

"Nobody. I entered the office quite alone."

"With what intention?"

"I had received an anonymous letter that day, stating that a receipt for the sum of two thousand dollars received by Mr. Grier from my grandfather, Isaac Elliott, was in the safe in the office and that the safe was easily opened."

"You had no reason to think—at that time—that a trap was being laid for you; that there was a large sum of money in the safe?"

"Most certainly not. That part of the matter did not interest me in the least. I knew, of course, in a general way, that it was supposed that Mr. Grier kept his money in his office safe instead of the bank. It was generally understood, I believe, that this was because he distrusted the banks."

"Very good. Will you be kind enough to trace your movements, Mr. Elliott, from the time you quitted your own room to the time you were found in Mr. Grier's office?"

The prisoner hesitated slightly. He seemed, after a moment, however, to draw strength from the steadfast gaze of his wife, who kept her eyes upon his face.

"There is very little to tell," he said evasively. "There had been ill feeling between Mr. Grier and myself for a long time. For nearly three years, in fact, we have been considered enemies. He is a man who nurses fancied grudges, and he had made things unpleasant—exceedingly unpleasant—for me in a great many ways. So, when the letter came, I determined to find out if the information which it contained was correct."

"Very well."

"I did not tell my wife where I was going that night. Had I kept the letter, I dare say I would have laid the whole matter before her. As it was, when I went through my pockets just after supper that night the letter had disappeared."

The lawyer, Gunning, took a stained and folded paper from his own pocket and handed it to Elliott. "Is that the letter of which you speak?" he asked.

Something in Gunning's face, as he asked the question, caused every juror to lean forward in his chair and hold his breath. The nervous juror—and there always is a nervous juror in every trial of any importance—coughed slightly and then swallowed apologetically. Elliott read the paper slowly.

"This is the letter which I received," he said then a little breathlessly.

"You are not mistaken? You are under oath, you must remember!"

"I remember perfectly. This is the letter."

"And one calculated, I should say, to stir any injured man to prompt action," commented Gunning softly, but he did not look at the prisoner. Instead, he glanced at the prisoner's wife. "I will read this mysterious letter aloud, Your Honor, and then submit it to the jury as a part of the defense. Perhaps I should say, in the beginning of this trial, that we will attempt to prove that the man who wrote that letter deliberately laid a trap for the man to whom it was written—and that he robbed the safe of the money which it contained five minutes before Mr. Elliott entered the office. I will now, with Your Honor's permission, read the letter:

MR. HOLLIS ELLIOTT,

DEAR SIR:

I feel it my sacred duty to inform you that Robert Grier has the receipt for the money that old Isaac Elliott, your grandfather, paid him. He keeps it in a little compartment in his safe. He's got a spite against you and your wife, and as long as he's got that paper in his possession, he'll swear that the old man was a low down thief. The safe in the office is old and no good, and any ordinary key will unlock the door of the office. A word to the wise is sufficient.

A FRIEND.

The jury, as one man, drew a long breath of relief when the reading of the letter was an accomplished fact. Gunning turned to Elliott again. "You've now heard the letter read," he said slowly. "You say again, under oath, that this letter is the identical one that you received?"

"Yes."

"You may proceed with your statement, then."

"After my wife and I had retired, I got up, telling her that I had a very bad headache, and that I would have to go to the doctor for some medicine. I did not think that I would be gone very long. I thought then that it would be a very simple matter to find out what I wanted to know, and I be-

lieved that, in case I did find the receipt, I would be able to snap my fingers at Grier and his threats—in case he tried to make things unpleasant for me."

"Did you see anyone on your way to the office?"

"I did not. It was late, nearly midnight, and the streets were deserted, or practically so. Just as I turned the key in the lock, with a trifle more difficulty than I had expected, I thought that I heard a step and a rustle somewhere near me."

"What next?"

"I went on into the office and struck a light. Just as I did so, I detected the odor of hot tallow, and I noticed that the candle wick was still smoking, and that there was still a tiny bead of fire on the end of it, just as it had been extinguished. There was melted tallow, too—a little puddle of it—on the floor just in front of the safe. It was noticed afterward. It was found, after Grier and the officer entered, that the back door of the office was unlocked."

Gunning flashed a quick glance over the crowded court room. "You are dismissed," he said to Hollis with another and less successful attempt to keep the dislike out of his voice. "If the prosecution desires to cross-question you, you can be recalled later. I will ask Henry Maddox to take the stand," he added, and then turned to the judge again. "If there is anything that is informal and not according to rule and regulation about the trial this morning, I beg Your Honor to remember that I am hoping to get a verdict for my client without the necessity of the jury leaving their seats, and that I am trying to save the County the expense of a long trial."

The judge nodded and leaned back wearily in his chair. Gunning turned back to Maddox. "Your name?" he said briskly.

"Henry Maddox."

"Age?"

"Twenty-five."

"Profession?"

The witness hesitated; someone in the court room laughed, and Gunning

frowned. "I guess I am sort of a jack-of-all-trades," said the witness at last.

"Did you know a man named Patton, a sort of journeyman printer, who was half tramp, and who was about here two or three months ago?"

"Yes."

"Will you relate the particulars of a conversation which you had with Patton somewhere about the middle of April?"

Maddox fixed his eyes upon Gunning. "Patton was drinking that day, and when he drank he always talked a great deal. We were in Pryor's saloon."

"Were you drinking?"

"I was drinking a little," confessed Maddox. "I wasn't to say drunk. We'd got to be pretty thick, Patton and I had. He told me that day that he had got hold of a plan to get a lot of money—said that he'd overheard a conversation between Grier and a man named Smith about a note, which Smith had either paid or was going to pay that day. I thought that Patton was blowing, and I guess that I didn't pay very much attention to him. He said that he had heard that there was a row on between Grier and Elliott, and that he was going to write a letter to Elliott, telling him that Grier held the receipt that there had been such a muddle about. He declared that he had sounded Hollis, and that he believed that he would be just fool enough to jump at the chance to get even with Grier. About what he said was, that he knew that Elliott would bite in a minute at bait like that. And his own intention, so he said, was to wait, and just as soon as he knew that Hollis was going to the office, he would precede him by a few minutes, get his own hands upon the money and leave Hollis after that to take just what was coming. He showed me the letter which he had written to Hollis."

"Is this it?"

The witness touched the paper gingerly. "This is it," he declared firmly and finally.

Grier half rose in his place, his mouth opening and closing like that of a

stranded fish. "You—" he spluttered, then turned a brilliant beet color and subsided again. He still stared wildly at the witness.

"I fail to see—unless Patton fore-saw Grier's visit at night to the office—why Elliott's part in the affair would benefit Patton any," remarked Gunning softly, but without emphasis.

"He had taken measures to insure Grier's presence, sir. At least, that is what he told me. He had sent a letter also to him—"

"That is a lie!" snapped Grier.

The judge scowled. "You will be recalled in a moment, I dare say, and allowed a chance to explain the matter," he said testily. "Another remark from you, sir, and you will be fined for contempt of court."

"Did you see the letter which Patton told you was to be sent to Grier?"

"I did not. He merely told me that he was going to write to Grier and tell him that there was a plot on foot to rob the safe in his office."

Gunning signaled the witness that he was through with him. He asked permission, however, to recall Grier for a moment before Maddox was turned over to the counsel for the prosecution.

The testimony of the last witness had penetrated past Grier's air of studied indifference and put him on his guard. His face had turned the sodden, purplish color of a rotten-cored apple, and he was breathing hurriedly. "You heard the evidence given by Mr. Maddox," said Gunning severely. "May I ask just why you have said nothing about this letter of Patton's?"

"There was no letter!" stammered Grier, plucking at his throat chokingly.

Gunning paused—for Grier's impassioned denial to be fully weighed by the jury. "Was it your usual custom to become alarmed about the money kept in your office, and to return at midnight to assure yourself of its safety?"

"No, but—"

"As a matter of fact, had you ever done so before?"

"I never had. But, you see—"

"You had kept large sums of money in the same safe before at different times, had you not?"

"I had kept money in the safe frequently. You must remember—"

"Please keep to the point at issue, Mr. Grier. You are only muddling things when you enter into long explanations, which explain nothing, and which nobody wants to hear. As a matter of fact, then, for the very first time in your life, you became alarmed about the safety of the contents of your safe and hurried down to your office, at the precise moment that the defendant happened to be there. The day of miracles, it seems, is not yet wholly past. Are you a spiritualist, Mr. Grier?"

"I am not!" said Grier emphatically in a smothered voice.

"You see, I am asking the question because that might possibly explain—You may retire, sir." And the unhappy witness, with a wild look in his eyes, and fairly frothing at the mouth with rage, relapsed into a seat.

"A dozen words with the coroner now, and I will cheerfully turn the matter over to the State," said Gunning easily. "I believe that you held an inquest on the body of Mr. Patton, Mr. Myers. I suppose there is no use going into the question of the man's death. He was killed some time ago in what has been supposed to be a drunken quarrel with a companion, who afterward disappeared. Was there anything about the body—as you remember after examining it—to support the theory that the man had been robbed and then murdered?"

Myers rubbed his dry palms together nervously. "Well, the pockets of the corpse were turned inside out, and a five-dollar note was found near the body," he said. "We all, as I remember, remarked on its being a little odd that they should have any money, the two of them. They were regular bums."

It was in vain, after that, that the prosecution put in its most telling blows—that Maddox was arraigned as a perjured liar, and Myers himself

termed a subornor of evidence and a hired tool. As predicted, Hollis Elliott was triumphantly vindicated without the jury quitting their seats. When Grier left the court room, he left it with the knowledge that he stood, stamped for all time to come, as a common, cheap villain, who, to gratify a childish spite, had woven a net for an innocent man and been caught therein himself.

In the little cottage—little better than a hovel—Elliott and Gunning had their last words together. "Raymond, that man on the jury who shook hands with you so effusively after the verdict was rendered has taken a fancy to you, Elliott," said Gunning wearily. "He told me that he was going to make a place for you in his office. For God's sake, take care of Molly, Hollis—better care than you have ever taken before! It makes me want to commit murder to see her suffer as she has suffered lately!"

His emotion scarcely touched the man before him. "It is well for you to talk!" said Hollis bitterly. "You have made me a beast—unfit to speak to her now! It would have been far better for me to have died with disease or rotted in a filthy prison! It would have been far better for her! I am not guilty of the theft of the money, Lloyd. But that letter, which you produced in court today, I never even saw before! I burned the one which I received. *And Patton never wrote it!*"

"Who did?"

"I wish to God I knew—positively! But I know that Patton didn't!"

Gunning only looked at him drearily. "Which paid the higher price, Hollis—you or I?" he asked bitterly. "You are a liar, it is true. But I am something infinitely worse—a liar, a cheap forger, a jackal that preys upon the dead! I've cleared you, Elliott, for Molly's sake—not for your own. But I've saved you at the cost of my own self-respect. I've paid for Molly's happiness, you see—the highest price that a man can pay—for what he wants!"

He leaned forward, and for the first and last time the two men shook hands

solemnly. They were ratifying a treaty.

And in the meantime, with his head in his hands, Grier was trying feebly to clutch what comfort he could from the results of the trial. "I won half that I set out to win, anyway," he said to himself in a whisper. "They'll never dream that *I* wrote that letter on pur-

pose to catch Hollis, and that I stole the money myself! They had me in a place where I couldn't tell what would have cleared that poor devil out yonder in the graveyard!" He looked over his shoulders nervously as he went upstairs to bed. He, too, had paid a price—for something that he did not want.



A SAILOR'S SONG

By WILLIAM H. HAYNE

WHEN the breeze blows free and the rising sea
Throbs at the harbor's mouth,
Through my pulses sweeps the call of the deep,
Be it north, east, west or south.

*What joy to ride o'er the buoyant tide,
With the winds and the waves at sport!
Then up and away—no need to stay!
There's a sweetheart at every port!*

Unshackled from home, forever I roam,
Tossed on the ocean's breast,
To kiss and to part—for a sailor's heart
Is never a heart at rest.

*What joy to ride o'er the buoyant tide,
With the winds and the waves at sport!
Then up and away—no need to stay!
There's a sweetheart at every port!*

The shore is a chain, but the curbless main
Rolls 'neath the arching sky,
And this mighty sea is the world for me;
No landlocked man am I!

*What joy to ride o'er the buoyant tide,
With the winds and the waves at sport!
Then up and away—no need to stay!
There's a sweetheart at every port!*



YOU never really know a woman until after you have married her, and then the knowledge isn't of much use to you.

DOLLARS TO DOUGHNUTS

By ELIZABETH PAYNE

A MAN," observed Dorothea reflectively, "would be a fool to marry a woman unless he is sure she is more in love with him than he is with her."

"A most sensible arrangement," I agreed affably.

Dorothea twisted her steering wheel in the annoying and disconcerting way she has when deeply engrossed in thought, and the car left behind a long trail of zigzagging parallels.

We were motoring over to the Commodore's for tea, and, as usual, my part was simply that of passenger—which well suited me, however, with Dorothea as chauffeur. I loafed back, indolently happy, watching the little curls that whisked about beneath her chiffon veil.

"Because," she continued in an oracular manner, "unless she is more in love than he, a man will never be able to make a woman as happy as it is possible for her to be. Women love so much more than men that they need to give more. Now the woman who loves a man completely will not demand too much of him. What he does and is will satisfy her just because he is—himself; but if his love be the greater he will never completely please her. In her soul there will always be the consciousness of the man whom she might have loved with her utmost capacity, and that," quoth Dorothea, "would have been better than he loves her, for the simple reason that it would have been better than any *man* is capable of loving."

Dorothea does seem astute for one who appears so young. Certainly she strikes you as young. Perhaps it is

the curls. There is a little one just back of her ear that is positively infantile. I watched it now, blowing in the wind, and inquired indolently:

"And when a man wants to ask a woman to marry him, is he to make sure she loves him the most? And is he to let her know it? For if so—"

"Now you are frivolous," protested Dorothea reproachfully.

"Not at all; I am merely seeking information. Now, suppose it were you and I—"

"Oh, of course I was speaking generally," she interrupted hastily. "You," with disapproval, "are invariably so personal."

"Invariably, Dorothea, where you are concerned. It is difficult, you see, for me to detach my mind from you and keep it on less interesting generalities. Yet, if you insist—"

"That is hardly the question—"

"No," I maintained, "the question remains the same as usual. It is: *When are you going to marry me, Dorothea?*"

"Well, really, Billy, if you are going to begin *that* again—" She sat up very straight and put on the second speed. We shot ahead for a mile or so, but when the car slowed down a bit at a hill I corrected her amiably:

"Not begin again, Dorothea; only going on."

"Yes," she commented spitefully, "like the ancient brook—forever and forever."

"Really, Dorothea," I persisted patiently, "I don't see what in the world you are waiting for. You promised to answer me before I sail, and you know," despondently, "there is only a week more."

"Ten days," corrected Dorothea briskly. "Ten whole days. Oh, there's lots of time!"

"If I thought you would turn me down after—"

"You are so persistent," she complained in an aggrieved voice. She was looking straight ahead at the unwinding ribbon of road before us, but in spite of her severe expression, I discerned the dimple in her cheek, and that dimple is always a sign that Dorothea is inwardly tractable.

"After all," I demanded, encouraged by the dimple, "what *are* you waiting for, anyway, Dorothea?"

"I want to prove you."

"Oh! Haven't the past three years proved me?"

"Nonsense! You were in South America. There was nothing to try you. Now you are going to cruise around Europe—and on the flagship, too. Think of all the fascinating foreign girls you will be introduced to. I understand the Russian girls are simply irresistible—all navy men tell one so."

"Dorothea, if you don't accept me this time, as sure as I live I won't come back. I'll marry someone out of spite."

Dorothea's chin went up.

"Whom, pray?"

"A Russian girl, perhaps; perhaps Mrs. Carroll." I glanced at her tentatively out of the corner of my right eye.

"Humph!" said she. "If that," with cutting sarcasm, "is the type of woman you want to make your wife—"

"I did not say so," I protested mildly; "I merely insinuated that if one lady will not marry me, there are others who might be persuaded to."

"No doubt Mrs. Carroll might," she said vindictively. "Why don't you try? You wouldn't have to try hard."

"It might be rather suitable," I mused dreamily.

"Do you mean that?" Dorothea pulled the car up short, and turning her head looked me squarely in the eye.

"Why not?" I maintained with imbecile assurance.

"Is it a threat?" she inquired freezing. Then she laughed and we started on again.

"Oh, Billy, you know you will come back!" she flung at me over her shoulder. "You know you do, every single time."

"Madame, I interposed with dignity, removing the whisking chiffon veil from my eyes, "you are pleased to trifle with me."

"But you are so amusing, Billy."

"It may be amusing to you," I observed grimly, "but if you will remember, Dorothea, I have been pretty patient. Three years is a long time; six will be longer yet. Let me remind you, Dorothea, that we are both growing older."

"Indeed! You may be, Lieutenant William Maynard, but speak for yourself, please."

"Besides," I persisted, unheeding of minor interruptions, "do you consider the extravagance? Do you think of what it is costing me to be running out here all the time? Do you realize that what I have spent in railroad fares alone these past weeks would almost have furnished an apartment for us?"

"I told you it would be wiser to buy a commutation ticket," murmured Dorothea.

"Do you suppose it is any pleasure to me to be always your father's guest—to have you drive me about in your car—to accept from you luncheons and dinners and—"

"And frequently breakfasts," reminded Dorothea gently.

"Do you suppose I *enjoy* it?"

"Well, you have appeared to. If it was all a pretense—"

"Now, once more, Dorothea, are you going to marry me or are you not?"

"Oh, well, if you put it that way—"

"No," I put in hastily, "I don't. I mean, are you going to marry me now or are you going to put me off for another three years?"

She shrugged her shoulders and the car veered unpleasantly sideways.

"You know very well, Billy, that I have always said I would marry you some day if you would wait—"

"Wait! Ye gods!"

"Well, if you don't consider it worth while—"

"Now, Dorothea, do you think, yourself, that is quite fair?"

She laughed contritely.

"Honestly, Billy, I know as well as you do that I am the most exasperating girl in the world, and you are the dearest, most patient fellow alive; but I—I do hate to give in and"—in a low voice—"and belong to anyone but myself."

I instantly squeezed the hand nearest me, and the car swerved perilously toward the edge of a ravine.

"Let's make a bargain," I suggested.

"I'll tell you," interrupted Dorothea, who of all things adores a bargain—which, of course, implies a chance to slip out: "There is the Commodore's house ahead, just beyond the turn. Now, Billy Maynard, listen to me. If Aunt Sarah has those unwholesome doughnuts, which you know she always instructs Ann to make when you are coming—if, I say, there are doughnuts, I'll answer you 'Yes' tonight."

This time it was my chin that went up.

"If you care to make a flippant joke about something that is life or death to me—" I said resentfully.

Dorothea's eyes were shining with mischief, but they looked honestly into mine.

"No," she insisted, "I am really in earnest. I never can bring myself to decide it. Let the doughnuts decide it; and if the decision is in your favor—you know I never do things by halves—I'll—I'll marry you before your ship sails."

"Dorothea!" I gasped. Whereupon Dorothea very properly reminded me that the road was a public one, and that a touring car must be guided with undivided attention.

"Besides," she remarked provisionally, "there may be something else for tea. The Commodore is at home now, and he has a weakness for waffles. In fact, Billy, I feel positive that it will be waffles."

That it should not be waffles I de-

cided with instant and grim determination.

"In ten minutes, Dorothea," I announced dramatically, "you are going to be mine."

We were sitting on the piazza steps waiting for tea to be announced. There seemed to be some unforeseen delay in the kitchen, and the Commodore had been filling in the time by showing me around his vegetable garden, of which I verily believe he is more proud than of the squadron he commands.

"Don't you be too certain," returned Dorothea with aggravating superiority. "If I were in the habit of betting, I would like to lay you odds that you are wrong."

"Then you'd be throwing good money away," I retorted.

For answer Dorothea opened the little silver purse at her belt and laid a bill on the piazza step between us.

"Five to one," said she, "it is waffles."

"Good heavens, Dorothea, you are reckless!"

"No," observed Dorothea serenely, "I am *sure*."

"Yes," I responded sententiously, "women generally are, when they bet."

"Let's see your money," she suggested.

"But, my dear girl, I don't want to bet with you."

"Maybe *you* are *sure*," suspiciously.

I hastily went through my pockets and produced a twenty-dollar bill and some small change.

"My little all," I admitted modestly.

"Then where," demanded Dorothea, gazing at me severely, "is that silver dollar you made such a fuss about taking in change when we stopped for gasoline this afternoon?"

"Silver dollar?" I faltered blankly, not daring to meet her accusing eye. There are times when it has occurred to me that Dorothea is oversherwd for a comfortable helpmate.

"I don't know what you mean," I declared with a fine boldness.

Dorothea slipped the five back into her silver purse.

"After all," said she, "I think I won't bet. I am not so sure as I was."

On the way to the dining room she managed to get close enough to me to whisper indignantly:

"I *should* think you would be ashamed, Billy Maynard!"

When we gathered at the table, however, she was all dimples again.

"I do hope, Aunt Sarah," she began, "that you have everything we specially like for tea. Billy and I are simply ravenous."

"Dear child, of course, all your favorites—chocolate and fried chicken and strawberries and—oh, I presume waffles; the Commodore *will* have them, whatever else, you know."

I could feel Dorothea's gaze boring into me, but I was discussing the unfortunate errors of the Navy Department with the Commodore, and my expression, I flattered myself, would have done credit to a plaster cast.

At that moment the swinging door from the kitchen was pushed inward and black Ann entered. She carried a plate in either hand.

The color in Dorothea's face was the prettiest thing in all the world. She shot one glance at me, and there was a look in her eyes that made me feel like a villain—and like a conquering king.

I rose from my chair.

"Commodore," said I impressively, "I do not believe there will be any more auspicious occasion than the present to make known to you and Dorothea's aunt the news which she permits me to tell you, first of all. She has at last consented to marry me. She has"—I fixed Dorothea firmly with my eye—"promised to marry me within ten days."

"Good Lord!" gasped the Commodore. "What won't that madcap girl do next?" He is a nervous old gentleman, whom sudden domestic shocks upset; but he took out a bunch of keys and handed them to Ann, and I caught the pleasantly suggestive words, "Plenty of ice, mind!" in his deep bass growl.

His little wife rushed instantly to embrace Dorothea, and Dorothea looked steadily at me over her aunt's shoulder, and this time I felt only like a king.

"I was so afraid it would be that rich Jenkins," sighed the Commodore's wife, wiping the tears from her kind eyes. "He was so attentive before you came home this last time, Billy. Oh, Dorothea, we are so glad and so proud! A sailor's granddaughter, a sailor's niece, and now a sailor's wife. It is as it should be, dear child."

"I don't see anything to be particularly proud of," said Dorothea, a little tearful but still Dorothea. "It was dollars to doughnuts that Billy would win in the end."

"Only twelve hours more," sighed Dorothea mournfully, "and I shall be a widow."

"Hardly as bad as that, dear."

"Well, there's not much difference that I can see."

It was the last evening of my precious leave. In the morning I must take Dorothea back to her father and sail away from her. The honeymoon was glorious over the water, but I don't think either of us saw it that evening except as a silvery blur.

I looked down at the curls lying against my blue coat; somehow they looked younger than ever.

"It almost makes me wish," I said dolefully, "that I were a miserable civilian pegging away in an office."

"Nonsense!" returned Dorothea indignantly. "A civilian, indeed! I guess not. Lonely as I shall be—"

"You wouldn't have been," I interrupted remorsefully, "if you had married the rich and attentive Jenkins."

"Would I not? That shows how little you comprehend your Dorothea. Why, even in spite of your duplicity, Billy, I lo—"

"My what?"

"Your duplicity, dearest."

"I fail to understand you, Dorothea."

"Now, once for all," said she, and the tears had given place to laughter,

"now that we are married and all, you might as well understand that I know very well what became of that silver dollar the night we were at the Commodore's. I mean the one you passed through the kitchen window to Ann when the Commodore walked you around the vegetable garden. You old goose! Did you imagine I couldn't smell the waffles the minute we arrived at the house?"

"Dorothea," I acknowledged meekly,

"I see the game is up. It is true; I won you with a silver dollar."

"And doughnuts," she added. "Oh, Billy," she whispered, snuggling up to me under the entrancing light of the honeymoon, "I am so glad you had the wit—"

"And the dollar, dearest," I added feelingly.

"For, my lieutenant dear, you might have known that I meant to accept you that day, all the time."



WHEN LOVE CUT

By WALTER S. TRUMBULL

LOVE had cut the two as partners
And, as all the rules demand,
On the deal the happy lover
Showed a *diamond* in his hand.

Later, "If there be a reason
To divide this man and maid,
Now declare it," spake the Parson.
"Boldly call a *spade* a *spade*."

But *hearts* was the declaration,
And, with none to intervene,
Ere the Parson said, "I *double*,"
Father gave away the *Queen*.

At this sight rejected suitors,
With remarks that were profane,
Took to *clubs*, nor hoped for *honors*,
Since they only had *chicane*.

Then, by way of consolation,
Long they drained the flowing cup,
Till *no trump*, not even Gabriel's,
Had a chance to wake them up.



TRUE consistency is a jewel; and the most charming women display the least jewelry.

PROVERBS OF A NEAR- PHILOSOPHER

By MRS. WILLIAM ROYALL

A PROMISE is only a mortgage on our good nature, and it is usually foreclosed.

He who cries loudest in his own pain has the dullest ear for the suffering voice of another.

Politic people are like way trains—too accommodating to be relied upon.

Man endures pain as an undeserved punishment; woman accepts it as a natural heritage.

A wife thinks her husband infinitely better—or worse—than he really is; only his pretty stenographer knows.

Some caustic people always hit the nail on the head, little knowing that it would be courteous to miss it occasionally.

The only fiction about many stories is the happy ending.

What's one man's treason is another man's patriotism.

When virtue hides its face we call it modesty; when vice hides its face we call it shame.

In the beginning we all get busy to get happiness; we end by becoming too busy to be happy.



UNDOUBTEDLY BAD

MARY MILD—Wouldn't you call her a—ah, doubtful character?

CARRIE CAUSTIQUE—Not unless you wanted to give her the benefit of the doubt.



HAD HE, OR HADN'T HE?

FRÉDDIE—I have an idea!

TEDDIE—Really? How did you get it?

FRÉDDIE—I haven't an idea.



A WOMAN is extolled for her virtues, and adored for her weaknesses.

FATE'S JUGGLING

By ELEANOR VICOCQ

SOME instinct not strong enough to be easily accounted for made Sterne aware of change as soon as he came into the studio. The air, heavy with the fumes of coke and pipe smoke, was familiar, but, nevertheless, there was a new odor warring with the old. His first comprehensive glance explained it—a Delft bowl full of Roman hyacinths, rearing themselves erectly out of rich, brown mold, stood in a central position. There were other novelties which, as it were, gathered together and thrust at him, clamored for notice. But they were all unheeded in the next moment, as Hugh Blair came out precipitately from his bedroom.

"Well, you're unusually prompt! I wasn't expecting you till midnight or so—"

"Ungrateful cub! I've nearly killed myself trying to get here before the light went."

It did not occur to Sterne to look for change in Hugh. It was only six months since he had left, and the plastic age was past for both of them. As they sprawled in deck chairs Sterne looked at his friend, simply for the pleasure of doing so.

"Where's the Montmartre imperial, you liar?" he demanded, remembering the accounts of this new adornment in Hugh's letters. "I thought you'd be a budding baboon by now."

"It was sprouting well two months ago, but I looked like an Apache or a penny story hero, so I gave it a merciful ending," replied Hugh, coloring slightly.

Sterne pulled himself half up. "What have you been doing while I was stewing in that malarial hole?" he asked.

"Working a lot—eating—and playing a bit. Man wants but little, you know."

Hugh's face was a mystery, lit up by unknown inward radiances; his well groomed person now claimed some portion of Sterne's attention. He remembered hearing the slap of hair brushes distantly when he entered.

"I tell you what, Sterne; there are exactly two things you're sent into the world for: work—and the woman given to you."

"It's not that—you and—I can't make it fit!" Sterne's voice was unbelieving, though there could be no doubt of Hugh's meaning.

"Yes, it's Sylvia—Sylvia Ashburton."

"Now I see what ails you. I say, though, you might have told me; but I suppose—" Sterne stopped the words which his jarred thoughts brought him.

"Understand this," said Hugh quickly: "one of the things I gave my word to her about was that I wouldn't alter anything which had hitherto taken a lot of room in my life. I have her—soul and all, for which, knowing myself, I shall always give thanks; though the debt can never be paid."

Hugh reached for his pipe.

"Also I've my work—and you. Perdition to the carping apes who call life a ghastly mockery!" he concluded, with the rich imagery of his artist's imagination.

"Of course the glamour you're living in at present won't be eternally dazzling. But that's just it: you've provided yourself with something right

for any mood you happen to be in," said Sterne.

"You always say exactly what's wanted."

Hugh smiled at him with almost all the old good fellowship. But now that the meaning of the change was explained, Sterne found it impossible to be ignored. Such things apparently came to all men; but he had cherished an illusion that Hugh was unique, set aside to be his friend by destiny.

"Well, you'll make a lively pair!" he said, laughing. "Is she the same as ever? But what's the use of asking you?"

He watched Hugh bring over an unframed square of canvas, on which a girl's head was roughed in with that careless touch which was yet the life itself embodied for the moment within the space of four outlines. It was good to Sterne, after half a year on the West Coast, to look at Hugh's workmanship again.

"What about work?" he asked.

Six months ago that question would have rushed out among the first greetings, but now it was displaced.

"Going strong. Didn't you have any papers sent out to that desolate swamp lair? Have I got to wake you up to the fact that I'm a 'masterful example of the young generation, striking a new note that will soon become dominant'—that's from our respected press."

"There are still some streaks of light; may I have a look?" Sterne turned from Sylvia's face. "The 'Young Francesca'—how is she?" he asked.

"Nearly done. Come and see."

Under the skylight the shadows were fainter. Hugh pulled forward an easel from a dark corner.

Sterne's glance first fell on the slim hands quivering with young energy and the olive green mantle wind-blown against the red of a sandstone pillar, two things strong in his memory. His eyes lifted to the face.

"What—" he began.

Hugh was talking very rapidly, pulling back a curtain that made a shadow.

"I haven't done much to her just lately. Last month I took two days—Sylvia was away. She's got on a good bit since you saw her."

"If this is making you scamp work, it's serious. You should have chosen a working woman who understands your trade." Sterne, as he spoke, felt a wave of disappointment going over him. This was not the same Francesca, the first shapings of whose form he had watched a year ago. The touch had slipped in places, almost startlingly apparent to one who knew its characteristics. The type of girl was changed—the spirit he had known was gone from it.

"Why have you swept and garnished so much?"

The question was the only one Sterne felt that he could ask, although some twenty others jostled for precedence in his mind.

"That's reform, you heathen. I've been seeing the error of my ways. She was covered up with muck before; now she's as clear as the noonday."

"I believe I liked it better when you had to find your way to what she meant."

"For Heaven's sake, say what you think! You're not going to pick and choose lies and half truths for my benefit, surely! What's come over you?" Hugh returned wrathfully.

"Well, before I went she was lighted up from within. Now it's done from without—the most expensive and high class system produced, but—to me—it doesn't suit her."

"You've learned to speak in double-barreled metaphors out there. Give a plain man a chance—what are you driving at?"

Hugh's wrinkled brow indicated genuine bewilderment.

"She's not ready yet, you know," he reminded Sterne. "But Sylvia—you must talk to her. She says the improvement since the first month is a miracle. That comes, of course, from living in a miracle, as I've been doing."

Sterne, realizing that he was tired after his long journey, dropped into a

chair, but his eyes were still on the "Francesca." Her beauty had been elusive, unformed, with only the promise of the perfect flower. Where now was a heap of full-blown, sumptuous roses had been three or four early violets, hardly opened to the pale spring sun. There was, worst of all, a pouting underlip and a lurking dimple, which were Sylvia's—he had admired them too often in the original not to recognize them. Miracle it was that, in six months, Hugh's footing could have slipped back so far! Even the technique was inferior, conventional.

"It's not what you started out to make it," Sterne said.

"I'm sorry; I'd been rather counting on your liking it. Never mind; tell me something about what you've been doing. Have you brought home anything worth having?" Hugh pushed away the easel, but in a moment forgot his intention to speak of Sterne's affairs.

"You've got your shot home all right, old man. So she looks like a simpering program girl! Defend us from our friends!"

At least, thought Sterne, Hugh was now thinking of his work besides speaking. Some jot of Sylvia's sway was lessened momentarily.

"Where's 'Arcadian June'?" he asked swiftly.

"Here—I didn't send it to that show after all."

A completed picture was dragged forward. A sigh of satisfaction escaped Sterne as he looked.

"If you put that beside the 'Francesca—'" he said.

"D'you suppose I can't see they're different? That's the best I could do last year, but if I'm to turn them out identical to pattern like a bally mincing machine—" Hugh pushed a ruthless hand through his smooth hair.

"Is Sylvia in town?" asked Sterne.

"Yes; her people have gone to Egypt. She's with the Powerleys. Awfully decent they are; I never realized it before. I'm there about half of every day."

"The advantages of being engaged to a man of leisure."

Sterne, as a rule, took life easily. His own concerns and those of others sat lightly on his shoulders. But Hugh and Hugh's work were as nearly vital to him as anything he had so far met with. It was not for him to deny the powers of Sylvia Ashburton; he looked back at the perfectly modeled cheek line in Hugh's sketch of her. He remembered tones in her voice, certain little individual gestures. But her influence was shedding itself in the wrong atmosphere.

With a mutual determination they went back to their chairs.

"I've brought some photographs and things," announced Sterne, as Hugh lighted a lamp and placed it between them. There was a shade of effort in their abruptly commenced discussion on Sterne's recent expedition.

Since that afternoon Sterne had slipped back into all his old grooves. Meeting Sylvia and conversationally sparring with her ready tongue was one of them. The constant companionship of Hugh was another.

"Today," he said, coming into Hugh's bedroom on a brilliant morning, "suppose you don't go to the Powerleys', Hughie."

The suggestion was not spontaneous, but the outcome of much previous thought. The results of the occasional hour's work which Hugh snatched from a succession of days spent almost entirely in company with Sylvia had been carefully watched. Hugh would throw down his palette, calling maledictions on the light or the model—oftener, with habitual, impulsive truth, he admitted the fault to be his own. The rest of the day would be devoted to Sylvia. After all, an artist's time is not sacred to commerce like the more sordid professions.

Sterne sat down on the edge of the bed. Hugh lay deep in the pillows. Some portions of his senses were in use, but sleep still kept his eyes closed and his muscles inert. Last night he had been to a dance at the Powerleys'.

"Stir up, vagabond; look at this glorious light," admonished Sterne, shaking a limp shoulder vigorously.

The sun was streaming all over the bare little room, making patches on the bedclothes, glinting on Hugh's fair hair and revealing the mist of city dust on the furniture.

"Yes—beastly glare. I wish you'd pull the blind down," murmured Hugh. With a long sigh and a flounce of the sheets he turned over, facing Sterne. The veil of sleep was lifting a little, but his look was blank as Sterne met it accusingly.

"You're a lotus eater—a sybarite. You want a life of champagne and cushions. You used to be an apostle of hard fare and hard work; now you're this."

There must have been some dramatic instinct in Sterne; his tone and gesture were expressive and well chosen.

"Go away. I won't be fought all helpless and unarmed," protested Hugh. "How can you expect a man to argue before he's had a bath?"

"You can hit me if you like, but I think—" Sterne paused. It seemed hard to break up the peace of his short leave. His work abroad had taken a definite shape; this was the last he would see of the haunts of men, and of Hugh, till after three years' exile. Hugh flung his long arms above his head and kicked at Sterne.

"You look like a sphinx coming into shape sitting there. Lord! How can you do so much thinking before lunch? Chuck over those cigarettes; when I've had one I'll get up."

Then proceeded a leisurely lighting up. Hugh, after many contortions of his coverings, found a fresh position from which to contemplate Sterne's preoccupied face.

"Come along, out with it—I'll do for the confessional. What sort of backsliding have you got into? It must be your conscience that's ailing you," he said.

"Have you let anyone but Sylvia and me see 'Francesca'?"

"Rather not. She's too raw yet—I must give her a chance to ripen."

"She's overripe. Hugh, you're walking along the edge of failure. I'm not of your craft; I couldn't draw if I spent half a lifetime trying. But you've taught me to know a good thing. Francesca doesn't look as if you'd painted her."

His resolve was at last being fulfilled; Sterne was nervous, determined.

The cigarette in Hugh's hand almost singed the sheet. He flung it onto a chair and sat up on his elbow. His eyes were intent and wide awake now.

"Do you mean that?" he broke in.

"Every word. Something has happened to you while I've been away. You see differently; you don't work as you did before. 'Francesca' is witness—she shows the change."

"But what's happened to me? I'm just the same—except Sylvia."

"Exactly—Sylvia."

Hugh looked at him, amazed into silence.

"Of course, I know it isn't my business," Sterne concluded.

Hugh suddenly flung aside the covers and dragged himself out of bed.

"Come into the studio," he said, wrapping himself in a fur motor coat which lay near. Sterne followed to where the picture stood turned to the light. Gathering the dark fur around his bare throat, Hugh stood back to look.

"You think, then, that being engaged is—spoiling my work? I can see it's not like the 'June' over there. When I began this I hadn't anything else in my life; she filled it till Sylvia came."

"They can't both fill it," said Sterne. "One must give place. The question is: wouldn't Sylvia, eventually, be gladder that for a short time she had let 'Francesca' come first?"

The light, coming down from overhead, was relentlessly brilliant; every line and tone of the unfinished figure was clearly visible.

"I think—perhaps—she has gone off the track a bit," began Hugh uncertainly.

"You can't give yourself up to two things at once. No man could. If

you were shut up here, supposing Sylvia out of your reach for a time, couldn't you get back to where you were before I left?"

Hugh shook his head.

"You don't understand; how can I put Sylvia and all she means away from me—as if I sent away some present, a motor or a horse that had been given me? It's different; she's part of me and always will be."

"It's simply the fact of her being here in town that upsets the working part of you. It's quite natural, but you should try to exist without her—" Sterne broke off; so much speech was an effort to him. He distrusted his powers and felt a sense of coming calamity as he watched Hugh.

"It sounds almost as if you were talking sense. I don't quite see, though—" Hugh turned a worried look toward his friend.

"It would be worth it. Do you suppose that Sylvia wouldn't rather marry the man who had painted that"—he indicated the picture—"that, as you *can* paint it if you work with your whole mind—not at spare moments, your thoughts always on what you and she are going to do each day?"

There was a deep, cushioned chair into which Hugh dropped and looked at his picture again, with a criticism the sharper for Sterne's words.

"I'll tell you now," he said, "I've known for some time that I was doing cheap work. I'm not blind, but, somehow, it didn't seem to matter. I did mean big things when I began this. Sylvia wouldn't go to Egypt because I wanted her to stay here. How can I ask her to go away? It comes to just that." With a long sigh Hugh got up, searched for a brush, dipped it in turpentine and, standing before the picture, began gently to rub the roses into oblivion.

"Tinkered up, sixpence halfpenny amateur work," he muttered vindictively.

He was half clothed, breakfastless, troubled—but the creating fire once more burned within him. That much Sterne had achieved.

"It's no use denying the truth when you shove it at me. Sylvia doesn't paint—she's never had anything to do with it. You seem to understand why I must wrestle with things by myself. I'll try to explain to her, it wouldn't be for long."

"You have her sympathies, naturally all of them. And Sylvia is the most possible person; she listens—she's not self-centered—"

"I always forget you know her too," said Hugh, a little surprised at the eagerness of Sterne's tone. He went into the bathroom adjoining. Sterne heard the turning of the taps; then Hugh's head appeared.

"I'll be dressed in two licks, and then we'll get something to eat; and after that I'm going to the Powerleys," he announced.

"Look here—leave me out of it; everybody needn't know me for the meddler I am."

Sterne was conscious of doubts, vague apprehensions.

"All right, but what would be the use of playing around together as we've done for years if you couldn't say what you thought?" returned Hugh. But the proposed period unlighted by Sylvia's presence, which his quick imagination was picturing so vividly, brought shadows to his face as he closed the door.

Sterne went back to his hotel that morning disturbed in spirit, and less able than usual to drink in the sights and sounds of the city, which were so pleasant to him since his recent homecoming. He had a fear that he would not be able to keep in the background, that he would have to interview Sylvia on the matter. It struck him, as he thought of her, that she had improved since last year; her beauty was certainly more compelling, and, apart from that, she was less of a type, not so easily described. At any rate, it gave no cause for wonder that Hugh found all old ties awakened by this new bond.

Four days later came a summons from Hugh. In response to it Sterne went to the studio. It was a dark day

and cold. After his present steam-heated abode, the big building seemed particularly gaunt and draughty. Hugh greeted him with rare quietness. Indeed, to Sterne's fancy, a sort of hushed expectancy hung in the air. Also the studio was evidently consecrated to work. The hyacinths were banished, and Hugh's appearance was unstudied. Sterne was reminded of the days when "Arcadian June" and other pictures were in the midst of creation.

"Oh, there you are—sit down. I wanted to tell you about my plans." Hugh came over to Sterne's seat; the look of purpose on his face deepened. "Hope you enjoy seeing your advice taken for once. This looks like business, and it means it."

"I'm far more glad to see it than I can say," said Sterne.

"I shall owe you something for this, I expect—I won't forget it, though. I'm going to fight it out. I've got that Italian girl with the copper hair again."

"Shall you have to fight it? Is it as stiff as that?"

"The getting started is—but still, now that I don't feel pulled two ways, I'm almost keen again. It's just as you said."

"Good luck!" said Sterne.

"Thanks. Sylvia is going to stay at the Ledwards' for a fortnight, down in the country; they never stop in town much, you know—Mrs. Ledward's too delicate."

"Then you have talked it over with her?"

"Can't you see that? Yes, she quite understood; she was an angel. Do you suppose any other woman would have taken it like that?" Hugh's eager voice was a little unsteady.

"I've got a lot more than I deserve," he added with conviction.

Sterne got up. "I must go," he said. "Did I tell you I'm off to my uncle's for a duty visit tomorrow? So I sha'n't see you for a while."

"Are you? Well, by the time you're back there will be something for you to see."

Hugh turned back to his work almost before Sterne had left the studio.

During the last days of his stay at his uncle's house Sterne received a brief note from Hugh, reminding him that the Ledwards' place was within motor-ing distance of Peltworth, and suggest-ing a visit there before his return. The craving for a verbal account of Sylvia betrayed itself in the words. Sterne knew and liked the Ledwards; if he could so easily lighten the weight of imprisonment which on his account Hugh now labored under, it seemed worth doing. While he was steering his uncle's car along endless stretches of high road that afternoon, he realized that this errand filled him with a curious tumult—half elation, half apprehension. His interest in Sylvia since Hugh's engagement had naturally strengthened. Moreover, he wondered if she guessed at the influence which had made Hugh fling himself back into his work so abruptly.

He with difficulty kept the sudden disappointment out of his voice when Mrs. Ledward, as she greeted him, mentioned Sylvia's absence. She was riding with Mr. Ledward, but Sterne was doubly welcome, his hostess told him.

"I've had no one to speak to for hours," she said. "You must wait till they come in."

Sterne thanked her and took his tea, summing her up mentally as a nice little soul. When the dusk had fallen horses clattered up the drive, and Harry Ledward, with his cheerful red face, came bustling into the drawing-room. He gave Sterne a boisterous welcome.

"Why not stop with us for some time? It's the last glimpse we'll get of you before you bury yourself in that wilderness. He simply must—mustn't he Evie?"

Eveleyn joined in her husband's commanding entreaties.

"You really must," they chorused.

Sylvia here entered. In her tight fitting habit she seemed taller, her soft curves less apparent. But the dark

severity enhanced her brilliant coloring.

"Here, Sylvia, help us to keep him," said Harry.

"Mr. Sterne—is it really you? How nice!"

Sylvia smiled at the visitor.

"We can't let you go," Harry began again.

"Oh, thanks very much. I think I will stay if you're sure you want me," said Sterne, knowing that the easy terms on which he lived at Peltworth made this acceptance perfectly possible.

"Now that's behaving sensibly," said the delighted Harry.

Sterne finally spent a fortnight under the Ledwards' hospitable roof. The days slipped by easily. They rode, walked, played bridge and had coffee over a log fire in the evenings. Frequently the entertainment of Sterne was left to Sylvia. Harry's farming was seriously his business, and Eveleyn's slight strength did not permit of much exertion. More than once Sterne and Sylvia spent the most of a day together, riding across country or walking to exercise the dogs, parting from Harry at some point on the road where he was wanted.

On the evening of Sterne's last day, when he came downstairs, he was met by Harry, his jovial face unusually clouded.

"Eveleyn's had to go to bed—she's got one of her neuralgic headaches; it's the east wind, I'm afraid."

"I'm sorry to hear that," said Sterne.

"She'll be all right after a good rest," Sylvia reassured Harry.

After dinner, when they came back to the drawing-room, Harry said apologetically:

"Would you mind if I went up to Evie now? She likes me to read to her; nothing else puts her to sleep. But it seems a shame to leave you all the evening."

"Oh, we're quite happy," said Sylvia.

"Perfectly; don't you worry," chimed in Sterne.

"Well, it's awfully decent of you.

I'm afraid you're having a pretty slow time," said Harry.

"It's a comfort she's engaged, and Sterne a man of sense like that," thought the good fellow as he ran upstairs, glad to leave his guests without scruple. Even to his preoccupied vision, Sylvia this evening was of a particularly radiant loveliness.

"Let's talk—and by firelight," suggested Sterne.

He switched off the lights at her assent, and arranged himself cross-legged on the hearth rug. It was a leopard skin, a relic of Harry's bachelorhood. Sterne stroked the sleek head idly.

"Does it make you homesick for the West Coast?" she asked him.

"Homesick for a private Hades—not exactly!"

"We sha'n't see you for ages after this. It's too long, I think. I don't know what Hugh will do without you."

Then a silence came between them. Sterne searched in vain for the right words to break it. He remembered suddenly that it was his last evening here. Next day he would go to town to collect his kit for Africa. All the last week came back to him—the long, quiet hours which yet made short days. There had been one morning on the links, with the boundless green turf encompassing them, and a light breeze in their faces. The memory of it, he had felt then, would fill some of the loneliness to come. The future just now was without interest for him. He clung to the actual present, his thoughts centering on it ceaselessly.

"This has been a good day for Hughie—splendid light," said Sylvia.

This sudden mention of Hugh broke Sterne's chain of memories with a jerk.

"Yes," he said vaguely. There had been a tacit agreement that Hugh's voluntary sacrifice to his work was not to be discussed nor criticized.

"You'll go in and see how he's getting on, won't you?" she asked.

"Of course. But unless he's finished he won't let me in, probably. When he's got a fierce fit of work he's a

sealed book; the world may go on or not, as long as he's let alone."

"I know," said Sylvia. There was a touch of pathos in her tone.

"It does make one seem rather useless; I remember the feeling. But the result is worth it; think of the 'June,' for instance!"

"Oh, yes; how could I doubt that for a minute? I suppose I shall get used to being left out when he's doing something important. At first I had a ridiculous idea that I should be able to share it all, somehow—"

Sterne looked up, surprised; she had never come so near a confidence before. A dart of flame leaped up between the logs and showed him her face with momentary distinctness.

"That's the difference between a genius and the ordinary man," she said. "He seems to spend his time watching lest the divine fire burn out. Commonplace, hard work is simple enough for a woman to understand and sympathize about."

"Yes, but the ordinary men would give their souls to have genius. You know the pride you girls feel if your husband is above the common rut."

"It's a silly pride; all pride is foolishness. Oh, I'm tired, I think; I'm talking nonsense! Do make me stop," she laughed, but Sterne heard a quiver in her voice and leaned toward her with concern.

"I'm afraid we rode too far this afternoon," he said. "Don't let me keep you up any longer."

But there was relief in his face when she replied resolutely:

"Nonsense. It was a lovely ride, the best I've had this year—almost."

Sterne knew that Sylvia and Hugh had ridden together frequently; of course today's ride was not the best.

"It was—glorious; the right weather exactly," he agreed.

Every moment out there on the downs was being reacted in his imagination as he spoke. The mist drops on the grass, the thud of the hoofs, the crisp, chill air touching his cheek. And Sylvia's coil of bright hair thrust tightly against her hat brim. All these

were before him as he sat staring into the fire.

"Well, I shall owe Ledward a lot for the pleasure I've got out of my last glimpse of England," he said later.

"But you'll come back; it's not like leaving for always."

"It depends, really, on myself, but one can't regard anything so far ahead as a certainty."

He got to his feet with a restless movement and leaned against the mantel, facing Sylvia.

"By Jove, this is what the exile loses—the firelight, the atmosphere of home in every house and some woman sitting there as you are now. You can't guess how we miss it all!" he said, watching the firelight making pink dapples among the folds of Sylvia's dress. The smell of the burning logs filled the room. Sylvia looked up at him unwillingly, but some compelling influence made their eyes meet. He saw a storm of tears work sudden havoc in her face.

"Oh, I'm a fool!" she broke out, and shrinking into her chair, hid her face in the cushions. In that moment Sterne knew himself—every thought and inmost sensation was made clear to him.

"Don't—please don't! Must I always remember that I made you so unhappy?" he implored.

All attempt at deception had given way now. He went to her, ruthlessly destroying the barriers of caution he had built up so resolutely all these days.

"Sylvia, I'm going tomorrow. I won't come back. It can't make any difference. Give me something to keep; don't send me away with nothing—"

Sylvia's face as she lifted it was all stained and marred. Sterne bent over the chair back. There was no escape, and her surrender was complete—but, instead, in the next moment Sterne straightened up.

"I beg your pardon; I'm forgetting myself—and everything." His voice was sharp and strained. The opening of a door at the opposite end of the

room was entirely unheeded by them both. Sterne stood with his back turned, his eyes on the fire. Sylvia's sobbing breaths filled the silence.

"I came for my *eau-de-Cologne*—Why, Sylvia! Are you never coming to bed?"

They turned to see Mrs. Ledward in the doorway, a white kimono shrouding her.

"Yes, I'm coming now," said Sylvia.

Mrs. Ledward went upstairs again; the house was silent and deserted.

"Harry, I want to speak to you," said Eveleyn, trembling, as she tapped at her husband's dressing room door.

Hugh Blair was working. The completeness with which his toil mastered him made him oblivious to anything but the canvas before him and the image in his brain. The model, a pale creature with a perfect figure, stirred and sighed. He was not conscious of her presence except as a means to his end, and went on silently adding touch to touch. She looked at him wonderfully. Most artists varied their labor with occasional conversation; it was over the hour, and her legal rest had been forgotten. All this week the picture had progressed unceasingly. And still he worked without a moment's relaxation; the good looks she had admired were lessened, for the marks of overwork and strain had grown too conspicuous.

"Please—it's late; could you let me go?"

Hugh was jerked back to the outer world.

"Why didn't you speak before? I'm sorry I forgot. There, get yourself some tea; you're fagged out, and it's my fault."

Some of the forlornness of her aspect penetrated the mist that wrapped his mind as he dismissed her. He worked on till his head ached and a bar of pain lay across his shoulders. At last the dusk deepened enough to make form and color unintelligible. Hugh pushed back the easel and stood looking with keen scrutiny at the almost finished picture.

"It's good—it's coming right. Good Lord, why can't I always go ahead like this?" he said aloud.

The girl's figure, which stood out as the central interest from the still rough blacks and browns of the background, had the exquisitely turned outlines of the pale model. But her face, except for a few differences such as a dark coil of hair, was the face of Sylvia Ashburton. The man was hidden by shadows; only the line of his shoulders and bent head, and one hand gripping a chair back were visible.

"It'll make the Frenchmen sit up," Hugh smiled a little. "He leaned over her chair; they never heard Evie come in"—these words, quoted from Ledward's letter, repeated themselves to him as he looked.

Hugh's face showed changes since the last month—not only thinner—but an almost battered look, all the brightness stamped out, it seemed, by some inward conflict. The air of the studio felt overheated as he turned away. With a vague desire for outdoor freshness, he searched for his coat, first carefully carrying the wet canvas into the bedroom. Then a knock at the door broke the stillness. Hugh opened it as he was, unkempt and paint-smeared. His eyes met those of Sterne, who waited without.

"You? What have you come for?"

"I had to come," Sterne replied.

Hugh went back into the room, leaving the door open; Sterne followed him.

"I don't see your object. I've answered Sylvia's letter. There's nothing else to say."

Hugh sat down wearily on a much worn sofa.

"I suppose you think the whole thing a deliberate plan—that I used the 'Francesca' to get Sylvia away, so that I could play the game into my own hands?" said Sterne.

"It hardly matters what I think, does it?"

"I know well enough it's useless to make a defense; I'm not going to. Only, I want to say one thing. Of course, if you don't believe me, there's no help for it," said Sterne. He stood

looking round the familiar disorder of the room. The time seemed short since he was there last.

"Before I went to Peltworth I never suspected myself for an instant; at the Ledwards', when I began to realize what was coming, I saw no danger, for I thought myself less than nothing to her. That's the truth."

"Well, it's over; Sylvia has told me everything, and Ledward—poor Harry—he thinks it's all his fault. He doesn't see that he was only a useful super."

Sterne wandered over to where the "Francesca" stood. The light was still strong enough to see her by. For a moment the load of his trouble lightened. Here was something beyond any conception of his when he had wondered in Africa how Hugh's picture would look on its completion. Hugh came behind him.

"How do you like her? She's made rather a fuss. She goes to Gerstein tomorrow, for I want her out of my sight."

Sterne was silent.

"I didn't even read my letters till I'd finished her. I got so keen, I made everything else wait. A good idea, for 'Francesca's' sake, as it happened. I owe her to you entirely—I'm not forgetting that. Fair exchange no robbery, I suppose," Hugh laughed.

"I'm giving up this place soon," he added. "Mountmorris is coming with me for a year to try our luck at big game. When are you off?"

"It's hardly settled yet."

"Of course not; I forgot; it's my turn to—Look here, hadn't you better go? What's the good of this?"

Sterne took his dismissal in silence, glancing back once at the "Francesca" before he opened the door.

Left alone, Hugh took up a letter from Sylvia and read it through. Its words were familiar to him now—all the incoherent attempts at defense. She had realized that she could never be in sympathy with his work nor his nature. This new feeling was so different; if only she had thought more seriously before! Hugh threw it down and went out into the brilliantly lighted

streets below. It was nearly dawn when he came back. Against the unearthly gray-blue of the sky the lamps gleamed a dull primrose. He stopped to feel for his key. Two people passed him as he stood hidden in the shadow of the doorway—a girl in pretty tumbled finery, and a man, returning from some happy outing.

"Why not? There's no one to see," said the man's voice. The girl made some laughing, helpless protest, and the man, stooping, swept her half off her feet in a ruthless embrace. Kisses and a long sigh of content sounded distinctly in the hushed street.

Hugh let himself in. Upstairs in the studio the daylight was swiftly strengthening. He dragged out the unfinished picture. He looked at his own work impartially, almost as though it were another man's. The deft touch under the girl's tilted chin, the shrinking joy in her eyes, the rigid lines of both figures—his skill had never triumphed to this extent before.

But it was brutal in its very cleverness; half-savage impulses had filled him. Now, unaccountably, they were quieted. He took up a palette knife and without hesitation drew it across the still wet surface, working a swift destruction. His sudden determination was unwavering. When nothing but a blurred mass was before him, he thrust it against the wall.

Later, he was possessed by a succession of thoughts utterly different from those of the last few days. He pulled forward "Arcadian June." It reminded him of the little scene on the pavement—the soft, yielding curves of the girl, the bronzed arms of the young shepherd straining her against him. Scarlet tulips flamed in the long grass; a lark soared up into the blue, and the spirit of glowing summer reigned with that of innocent, joyous youth. Hugh wrote on the back, "For Sylvia." Afterwards he stood for several moments looking from his window as the dawn flung its scarlet and gold across the gray mists of the city; then, turning, he opened the studio door and closed it behind him.

THE CLOSED DOOR *

By EDMUND ELLIOTT SHEPHERD

CHARACTERS

THE HUSBAND
THE WIFE
THE LAWYER

SCENE: *Library of the Husband's Home.*

TIME: *The present. Midnight.*

SCENE—A library. In the center a doorway, curtained off, leads into a reception hall. At the right a closed door leads into the dining room. A large rug covers the floor. There is a large table in the center, and a small table at the left, upon which are a whiskey decanter, a soda siphon, glasses and bottles.

A desk telephone is on the small table. A large red-stained electric light shade hangs over the large table. Bookshelves line the wall up stage. An open fireplace and mantel are on the right, with a picture of the WIFE on the mantel. A smaller rug lies in front of the grate. A large Morris chair stands in front of the fireplace. To the left is a couch. Other library furniture, chairs, tables, etc., in mission style, complete the furnishings of the room. The curtain rises slowly.

HUSBAND (seated in the Morris chair in the glow of the fire in front of the fireplace, looking impatiently at his watch and speaking in a surprised tone) Twelve o'clock! (He rises and crosses nervously and rapidly up stage to the door and stands listening, then crosses to the small table at the left.) I mustn't let this thing get on my nerves. (He fills a glass with whiskey and soda and drinks.) What in the world can be keeping that old fool? (He picks up the telephone, then pauses.) Give me Blue 746. Yes. (He pauses for a reply, then speaks nervously and rapidly.) Hello! Mr. Walker there? He left fifteen minutes ago? No, he isn't here yet.

(The LAWYER enters at the center through the curtained-off doorway, carrying his overcoat and hat in his hand.)

Oh, yes, he is!

HUSBAND (turning from the telephone). Ah, there you are at last!

(The LAWYER crosses rapidly to the fireplace and stands warming his hands over the fire. He tosses his coat and hat on a chair as he crosses.)

HUSBAND

It seems as though I had been waiting for hours.

LAWYER

Ummmm—is that so? (He looks at his watch.) I hurried right over. It

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couldn't have been more than fifteen minutes. Let's have a little light here. (*He turns and faces the HUSBAND. The HUSBAND turns on the light over the center table. The LAWYER looks critically at the HUSBAND as the light flashes on.*)

What in the world is the matter, old man? It must be important, most important, or you wouldn't send for your lawyer at this time of night!

(*The HUSBAND has mixed two whiskeys and sodas and carries them to the other.*)

No corn juice for mine, thank you.

HUSBAND

Come, it won't hurt you!

LAWYER

No? (*He hesitates, then accepts the glass and drinks.*) Well, it doesn't look as though it would hurt you any. (*He gives the other the empty glass. The HUSBAND crosses to the table at the left and places the glasses there.*)

You look as though you had been struck by a cyclone, or hell had broken loose—or something.

HUSBAND

That's it! Hell has broken loose—and everything! (*He points to the Morris chair.*) Sit down!

LAWYER

Thanks. I guess I will.

(*He crosses to the chair and sits down.*) Nothing like taking things coolly.

(*The HUSBAND pushes the cigar box toward him.*)

(*LAWYER helping himself to a cigar.*)

Don't care if I do. (*He lights the cigar.*) Now tell me—what is the matter?

(*The WIFE appears at the door in the center and parts the curtains slightly. She is very much wrought up and frightened.*)

(*HUSBAND sitting on the edge of the table down stage.*)

I want to get this devilish thing off my mind, once for all. I've decided to apply for a divorce.

LAWYER

A divorce! Good Lord!

HUSBAND

Yes, I tell you, a divorce! I've considered everything, weighed the evidence and—decided. I want you to make out the papers—tomorrow; and you can't be too quick about it, either.

LAWYER (*astonished*)

Well, what next? If you had told me you were contemplating running for the Presidency, I might have thought you crazy. But a divorce! Why, I thought you were as happy as Republicans after election—or Democrats before, at any rate!

HUSBAND

So we were until recently, but things have changed. Do you know Will Blakely, man about town?

LAWYER

He of the unsavory reputation? Umm—yes.

HUSBAND

Unsavory reputation! Is that as strong as you can make it? I mean the low-lived cad who ruined the Morris girl's reputation and drove her out of town. I mean the old rogue who lives under the belief that any good-looking, well formed woman is his legitimate prey! I mean that scoundrel who deserted his wife here five years ago, just after she brought his child into the world, and for no other reason! That is the man I mean!

LAWYER

Humph! That is not a very high-sounding reputation, is it? But how the mischief does that interest you?

HUSBAND

Just this much, Walker: that old roué has been paying attention to my wife!

LAWYER

How do you know?

HUSBAND

Why—I hear it! I hear it everywhere. Everybody talks about it!

LAWYER

Talk—bah! And who's been talking to you and about you? The men, I'll

wager. The men on the street—the men in the clubs—in the offices and stores. Biggest gossips in the world. Some fool has been putting two and two together for you and trying to get you to believe it five. You must have stronger proof than that, old fellow, if you seek a divorce. Besides, there surely is no harm in anything she has done.

HUSBAND

No harm? No harm for my wife to drag her skirts all over the filth of this town, following this fellow? No harm in going with him to the theaters, to the cafés, to the races? No harm in giving up her mind, not to say her heart, to this beast? No harm? Why, man, if he were a decent-minded citizen and won her heart in fair play—fair play, mind you—and she were to come to me and explain the situation, there would be enough harm done, yet—I believe I'd give her up, if her happiness were at stake. But, heavens, man, it is this utter disregard for common decency, the dirt and filth through which the name of my wife—the woman I love—is being dragged! That is where the harm is! Why, he even brings her home and has the nerve to come right up to my door! And yet you say there is no harm!

LAWYER

But I have heard nothing about it.

HUSBAND

Then you must be deaf.

LAWYER

I always make it a practice to be politely deaf whenever my ears are in danger of being poisoned.

HUSBAND

Listen to me if you're going to advise me. I'm not relying altogether on tattle. This thing has been going on for weeks. At first I could not believe it! Then, yesterday I saw them together in the café of the St. Regis! Think of the nerve of that! When I got home last night I spoke to her about it, told her what people were saying, but she laughed. I told her what I saw and she shrugged her shoulders. I

told her what it meant to me and she became cold, distant and indifferent! Then my temper gave way. Flesh and blood could stand it no longer. And I told her that if I ever caught that snake crawling around my house I'd give him a piece of hot lead that would hold him till the coroner arrived! And by all that's holy, Walker—I'll do it! If I ever catch him with my wife again, I'll shoot—and I'll shoot to kill!

LAWYER (*rising quickly and placing his hand on the HUSBAND's shoulder in a determined manner*)

Come, come, old man! No threats like that! It won't do! Besides, you see, old fellow, if all you hear is true, she isn't worth it.

HUSBAND

Isn't worth it? (*He pauses and breaks away from the other.*) Walker, did you ever see her? Did you ever see her picture? (*He crosses to the mantel, picks up the WIFE's picture and carries it to the LAWYER.*) Look! Isn't she worth it? Look at her, man—look!

(*The WIFE enters through the center door. She appears wrought up with mingled fear and excitement. The men do not see her as their backs are turned. She eagerly takes in the whole scene. The HUSBAND continues without interruption.*)

See that hair, and those eyes! She is the dearest little girl that ever lived. And yet you say she isn't worth it! (*He places the photograph on the table.*) Why, man, I loved her. You old bachelor, you, you don't know what that means! And we were so happy! She was so good to me until this thing happened. She used to meet me every night at the door, no matter how late the hour. Then she would make me sit in that chair in front of the fire, and she would come and sit on the arm of the chair, twine her arms about my neck and cuddle her face down to mine. But this is all over, Walker—all over! Good heavens! What wouldn't I give if this were all a hideous nightmare, and her dear arms were twined about my neck now!

THE WIFE (*crosses impulsively to the HUSBAND and touches him on the arm*)
HUSBAND Jim!

HUSBAND (*starting up in astonishment*)
 You! So eavesdropping has been added to your list! (*Sarcastically*) Mr. Walker, allow me to present—my wife! Mr. Walker is my lawyer. (*He turns and crosses to the mantel.*)

WIFE
 Jim, don't be unfair! Let me explain!

HUSBAND
 I don't want any of your explanations! You might be able to justify those little lunches downtown; probably you can explain the theater parties with this fellow. But he was in this house tonight less than an hour ago! You both came here after the theater—and that you cannot explain! There is nothing you can account for legitimately. There is only one construction which can be put on such a visit.

WIFE
 What do you mean?

HUSBAND
 I mean that if you and this man were alone in this house together—after eleven o'clock at night—knowing I would not be home until—

LAWYER (*interrupting him in a commanding and indignant voice*)

Stop that! I'm your lawyer, sir, but you've got to play this game fair! How do you know they were at the theater together? How do you know they were in the house together? (*To the WIFE*) Madam, you can clear this atmosphere by answering one question. Do you deny this accusation?

WIFE
 I'll not discuss the matter. (*She crosses toward the couch at the left.*) The accusation is unjust and unfair. I feel I am not compelled to render an account. I have said all I am going to on the subject. (*She throws herself on the couch.*)

LAWYER (*turning to the HUSBAND*)
 Then let me ask you.

HUSBAND (*crossing to the mantel*)
 Go ahead.

LAWYER
 Where were you this evening?

HUSBAND
 At the club.

LAWYER
 That is where you heard this latest bit of gossip?

HUSBAND
 That is where I heard the truth. Hickley came in after the theater and told me he saw my wife and this man Blakely there.

LAWYER
 That was—what time?

HUSBAND
 A little after eleven.

LAWYER
 And then?

HUSBAND
 I came home and found my wife in this room in a very nervous, high-strung, excited condition. She parried all my questions and seemed distracted. My worst suspicions were aroused. Then I sent for you.

LAWYER
 What time was that?

HUSBAND
 About eleven-forty-five.

LAWYER (*turning to the WIFE*)
 Umm! Madam, what time did this man Blakely leave here?

WIFE
 I have said everything I—

LAWYER (*interrupting her and pointing to the closed door up stage*)
 Where does that door lead to? (*He crosses slowly to the door, then turns and faces them.*) Well?

HUSBAND
 To the dining room.

LAWYER
 Was it closed when you came in?
 (*The WIFE shows signs of deep agitation.*)

HUSBAND
 Yes. But what has that to do with this matter?

(*The Wife rises from the couch and crosses to the center.*)

LAWYER

I have a great curiosity to see the inside of your dining room. (*He tries the door and finds it locked.*) Locked! Madam, have you the key?

WIFE

I—I don't know. Isn't it there?

HUSBAND

Why do you want to get in there? (*He turns with a look of suspicion at the Wife.*)

LAWYER

My dear sir, I am going to try to solve what has become to me a great and deep mystery. (*He takes a bunch of keys from his pocket.*)

WIFE

How foolish! (*She stands by the table in the center, looking intently toward the Lawyer.*) Why—you don't mean to insinuate that—

LAWYER

I never insinuate anything, madam; I look for facts. (*He tries the keys in the lock.*)

HUSBAND (*taking a revolver from a drawer of the small table at the left and quietly placing it in his pocket*) I'm beginning to see! And if he's in there—

LAWYER (*puzzled*)

It's funny this key doesn't fit.

HUSBAND (*crossing to the Lawyer and handing him a bunch of keys*)

Maybe I can help you.

WIFE

Jim, for pity's sake, don't let that man get in there!

HUSBAND (*crossing to the Wife*)

You know as well as I do that Blakely was in there when you locked the door! Are you trying to shield him?

WIFE

Jim! If you have any pity for me—if there is the slightest bit of your love left, then tell that man not to open the door!

HUSBAND

Why did you lock that door? (*He bends over the Wife at the table.*) Look at me! (*He seizes her wrist.*) Answer my questions. Why did you lock that door?

WIFE

Jim! Are you crazy? You ought to know—you do know—the answer to all your questions. For goodness' sake, dear, come to your senses before it is too late!

LAWYER (*turning quickly from the door, where he has been trying different keys*)

This key fits!

WIFE (*crossing toward the Lawyer*)

Don't open that door! (*She clutches his arm.*) Don't open that door!

LAWYER

Now we shall see! I am thoroughly convinced that the divorce case between you two will be tried out here.

WIFE

Jim! You don't know what this means to you—or to me!

HUSBAND

Yes, we know what it means to you, all right—unless your flame has gone out through the window. It's a short jump to the ground.

LAWYER

I am your humble and obedient servant, sir; what is your pleasure?

HUSBAND

My pleasure? When a man tries to rob another of his wife, and hides in his house with her at this time of night, he deserves to be shot! And if he's there— (*He draws the revolver and rushes toward the door. The Lawyer catches the Husband's hand, wrenches the revolver from him and throws him to one side, places the revolver in his pocket, then turns and opens the door. A man's body is seen lying just inside the door. The Lawyer quickly kneels with a horrified gasp of astonishment.*)

HUSBAND

What is it?

LAWYER

I don't know whether it's a man or his dead body. It's too dark in here to see anything. Where's the switch?

HUSBAND (*crossing to the door*)

To your right, near the door; I'll turn it for you. (*He switches on the light, revealing a body near the door.*) Blakely! That dead body is Will Blakely's! (*He crosses to the center and collapses in a chair.*)

LAWYER (*closing the door, crossing to the table and looking from the WIFE, who sits in a dazed fashion on the couch, to the HUSBAND at the table*)

Well, are you people going to stay in this petrified condition with that thing in the house? (*To the HUSBAND*) Do you realize the ugliness of this situation?

HUSBAND

Ugliness? What do you mean?

LAWYER

What are you people going to do when the coroner takes charge here? (*He pauses.*) Pretty strong evidence, and it points to but one conclusion.

HUSBAND (*glancing at the WIFE with horrified suspicion*)

To but one conclusion? To what?

LAWYER (*taking a cue from the HUSBAND*)

I say again, the evidence in this case points to but one—person!

HUSBAND (*looking straight at the LAWYER*)

To whom does it point?

LAWYER (*pointing at the HUSBAND and keeping his finger leveled at him*)

There!

WIFE (*rising quickly*)

You lie!

HUSBAND

Thank God, it's not she!

LAWYER (*lowering his hand*)

Madam, I but express my most humble opinion. (*He turns angrily to the HUSBAND.*) Why have you been carrying on here like a madman? Why did you tell me he deserved shooting?

HUSBAND

Because I meant it! (*He rises and crosses to the mantel at the right.*)

LAWYER

Was it to obtain me as a witness to your insanity, or do you want me to take charge of your unwritten law defense? If you desire me as your lawyer, let me tell you the evidence against you is strong! There is the fact that you have listened to gossip and it has upset you! There is the fact that you threatened the life of this man here yesterday! There is the fact that you rushed home here this evening after being told this man was in your house! There is the fact—

WIFE (*breaking in upon him fiercely*)

Never mind any more of your facts, Mr. Attorney! I am tired of them all! It is a fact this—it is a fact that—it is a fact another thing! Well, it is a fact that this man has been killed, but beyond that you are guessing. A moment ago, in a mock trial for divorce which you endeavored to bring about, I refused to give an explanation; but here, in a trial for murder, I will speak! When my husband and I were married, we were happy—very happy! Then gradually he became engrossed in his business. To me he became cool and distant. I felt I was losing his love, and I looked desperately around for a weapon with which to defend myself. I found it. It was your jealousy, Jim, your green-eyed jealousy! You were always a man who loved the thing he had a hard time to get—or was in danger of losing. So, I turned to this man. I struck up an innocent flirtation with him, trusting you would heed. But it had no more effect upon you than water on a duck's back. Then, I plunged further in. I went out in public with him, went to the theater, danced and dined with him. You were too loyal or too cool to say anything, Jim, until you saw us with your own eyes last night; and then you spoke to me about it. I was glad—I was proud! But all through the miserable business there was one thing I was forgetting—and that was Blakely. I was unconsciously arousing in him a great passion, which some day could not help but break loose. Yet my thoughts were all for my husband,

and how I could bring him back. (*She collapses, weeping, in the chair by the table in the center.*)

LAWYER

Proceed, madam.

WIFE (*after a pause*)

Well, last night—I guess it was last night, for it is morning now, I suppose—we went to the theater. When we got home here and he found you were still out, he started to make love to me. I stood it as best I could, until he went too far. He went too far! He insulted me! I tell you he went too far! I believed myself in danger, and I—

HUSBAND

And you?

WIFE

I killed him!

HUSBAND

What? Mary!

LAWYER

Where did you get the revolver?

WIFE

Jim always has one around the house. It was on the mantel tonight. I threw it away—I don't know where.

HUSBAND (*starting toward the WIFE, then pausing, seeming to dread to approach her and turning impulsively to the LAWYER*)

Walker, you have the only cool head here. You simply must devise a way out of this horrible mess.

(*The LAWYER ignores the HUSBAND. He takes the revolver from his pocket, examines the chambers and smells at it.*)

My conscience, man, why don't you speak? You don't think they could convict her, do you? You don't think there is any danger? (*He turns to the WIFE.*) Mary, we've got to forget everything, forgive every offense. We must fight this thing out together; can't you see we must? (*He touches her on the shoulder.*) Mary!

WIFE

No! No! Leave me alone! Leave me alone!

LAWYER (*placing the revolver on the table*)

Why, madam, not one cartridge has been fired from this weapon! (*The*

telephone rings.) I'll answer it. (*He crosses to the telephone and picks it up.*) Hello! Yes, this is his residence . . . Yes. . . . Is that so? . . . I guess you'd better send an officer up here to investigate. . . . No bungler, mind you. Send Hadley, if he's there. It's more serious than you think. . . . Yes. . . . Good-bye! (*He places the telephone on the table and turns sharply to the WIFE.*) Madam, I congratulate you.

HUSBAND

Who was that at the 'phone?

LAWYER

Police headquarters. They have a burglar down there and they want you to prosecute him.

HUSBAND

Well, what has that to do with this mess?

LAWYER

This burglar has a quantity of silver with your name upon it, and his coat is filled with blood!

WIFE

Oh, I see it all! I see it all! Blakely must have walked into the dining room while the burglar was there; they had a fight and Blakely was shot by the burglar! Why, I heard that shot when I went upstairs to change my wraps, and I thought it was you, Jim! I thought you killed this man!

HUSBAND

So you told this story to protect me? You took the blame on your own shoulders to shield me?

WIFE

Yes.

HUSBAND

My darling, I want—

WIFE

Well, Jim, what do you want?

HUSBAND (*embracing her*)
I want—you!

(*The LAWYER sinks into a chair with a sigh of relief, strikes a match and lights a cigar.*)

CURTAIN

THE UNWRITTEN LAW

By CAROL SOPHIA D'ARTOIS

I LIVE and look abroad and take delight of all I see;
Delight my dearest income is from lands I hold in fee.
The sun-loved turf belongs to me of many an old domain,
And shimmering fields all silver under touch of wind and rain,
Horizon-stretching prairies blest and comforted with flowers,
And meadows lush and gardens sweet from kiss of summer showers;
White desert sands, far tropic isles, with strange, sweet fruit bedight,
And swamps with cardinal flowers by day where fireflies gleam by night,
Wide valleys green and forests dim, slow rivers slipping by,
And storm-kept peaks uplifted, fearsome passes stark and high—
All these are mine by the unwritten law, the unwritten law of the lover.
The greatest and grandest of landlords am I of landlords the wide world over!

I hold the little calling waves that play along the sand;
Mine are the tempest-broken ships by dauntless sailors manned,
Mine are the colors, pink and green and mauve, of heart's desire,
The sea shot through with beauty, through and through with tender fire;
The seething, treacherous, midnight sea, on hidden mischief bent,
The morning breakers, bearded, angry, foiled and impotent,
The old, unknown, unowned high seas, highroad of galleyed kings,
The living sea, profound and vast, great ancient womb of things—
All these are mine by the unwritten law, the unwritten law of the lover.
The greatest and grandest of sea lords am I of sea lords the wide world over!

The flickering amber light through pale, slow dropping autumn leaves,
The quiet place where Dawn her lovely, fragile garment weaves,
The blinding blaze of sunlight hanging over desert noons,
The glittering northern stars and soft, voluptuous southern moons,
The gray slant rain and the white still snow, too beautiful far for words,
The wonder of butterflies drifting past and joy in the flight of birds,
White clouds and the open sky, the sun and the heaven above,
The earth and the sea, the beast and the man, and God and freedom and love—
All these are mine by the unwritten law, the unwritten law of the lover.
The greatest and grandest of air lords am I of air lords the wide world over!



YOU can't tell a man's character by his clothes, but you can often judge a woman's lack of it by hers.

A NOM DE PLUME

By JACQUES WILMARTH

I AM told that every family has a genius. That is, there is one who stands out geniously by contrast. In this family Sharlee was the genius. Sharlee, Nita and their mother were the family.

The mother was a divorcée—a type of any of the near-exclusive sets. She was, however, quite the cleverest of her set—really a who-should-have-been. Woefully tall, a face crossing into middle age with signs of the struggle to keep on the right side, jettest black gowns naively twined about her and held up at the waist line, a lorgnette forever overlooked—all a perennial poise.

Nita was an amiable—person. Unwise, and yes, unmoral, to the point of hebetude, she had worn out her convent rigidity when she beheld Sherry's for the first time. Life to her was a race with herself, hoping some day to be able to drive a motor and see herself go by, coach in hand.

Sharlee was—I do not know. The lights and hour governed. I think she was twenty. To her friends she was a no-age minx, intent on teaing publicly or motoring to that chateau at Huntingdon as often as the seven days allowed.

I knew she was another sort.

In an ultra smart village in the west of an Eastern State—one of those towns where an attempt at making caste king makes it jester, the Melody Club was giving a hop. Sharlee was passing through. Her cousin presented me, and I had four dances—my name was elastic to suit the space on her card. Those dances! We saw New York—heard “Butterfly”—drove down the Avenue

during the first. The second and third and fourth gave me vistas panoramic. She told me of a fisherman who talked Confucius with her; she apologized for quoting poetry, then gave me bits from Elizabeth Barrett and Joaquin Miller; she missed a step and said: “This is Lehar, not Straus”; she pointed out her chaperon, saying what a perfect study she was for a Whistler. And yet there are people who will tell you: “They are not talking while dancing. It's not being done.”

My flowers, next morning, were rewarded by a note to come and eat fruit in the swing under the pear trees. The black scarf she was knitting reflected a mood. How I wanted that scarf!

She waved me a “New York—New York—New York” from the little depot two days later.

“It's good to know you are in town. Tuesday, at four, if you like,” came over the wire.

But seven Tuesdays came, and I saw twenty-six notes instead. These thoughts in purple on whitest linen were the other complementary angle that made of me a devotee to this goddess of all a man never finds. Here were heart and intellect I had sought and sought and sought. And though she sipped *crème de cacao* at tea, and couldn't forget that she had smoked in Paris, and so insisted that she still had “the urge,” and although she said “damn” and talked trial marriage, I was worshiping her.

And so I wrote my book. I wanted that certain publisher to put it out. We were in the same “dorm” at college,

THE SMART SET

and I forgive his thinking I would impose my work on him.

Still, I had to have *him* put out that book. I searched for a *nom de plume*. Why not Sharlee—Francis Sharlee? Euphonious, enough of the French to strengthen the story, enough Saxon to vouch for the English, and if accepted, I could explain and my name could be substituted. Ah! but where would be the tribute to Sharlee?

"The County of Elk," by François Sharlee, was on sale in December.

Sharlee showed it to her mother. Her

mother said: "It was very sweet of the boy. Is it selling well?"

Sharlee showed it to Nita. Nita said: "Gee, he must have quite a case, Shar! If it'd been me, I'd 'a' wanted the glory myself."

Sharlee said to me: "I like to have them think I am a little fool. It's great fun to sit back and watch them." She waited a moment. "If you want to be happy, don't let anyone think you are clever. People don't open to you if you do. But you—you know. Come when you want me, and I'll be waiting."



JUST OR UNJUST

By FREDERICK HALL LANE

JUST a tiny patch of moonlight,
Just a summer night in June;
Just a hammock, a piazza,
Just a dreamy, distant tune.
Just a cuddly girl beside you,
Just an arm around her waist,
Just a pressure light of two lips,
Just a parting made in haste.

Why are lovers all molested
Just at moments just like this?
Why are unjust people passing
Just in time to see that kiss?



THE SULTAN'S LIFE

"WHAT kind of life did that fierce old Sultan of Turkey lead?"
"Oh, I presume it was of the harem-scarem sort!"



LOVE in a cottage is romantic, but no mere woman objects to rose-colored silk curtains at the windows.

LE LIEN DE LA DOULEUR

Par JEAN REIBRACH

LES mots, relus pour la dixième fois, dansaient sous les yeux de Marville: "Jacques . . . accident . . . revolver . . ." lors que le faible enfir s'arrêta.

Il enfonça presque la porte d'entrée.

— Qu'y a-t-il? Parle donc!

En même temps, il s'élançait vers la chambre des enfants. Mais, devant le lit où Jacques était étendu d'une pâleur de cire, il jeta un cri terrible:

— Mort!

Un sanglot de Mme. Marville lui répondit seul. Devant l'atroce douleur, cependant, il reculait encore. Il appela:

— Jacques! Jacques! . . . Je t'en supplie, réponds-moi! . . . Mais ce n'est pas possible! . . . Le médecin? . . .

— Il est venu! répondit la mère.

Tout espoir croulait. Marville, avec un grand souffle, tordit ses bras. Quoi! cette chose était! Jacques, tout à l'heure si vivant, si fort! Jacques, si bon, si doux, si intelligent à dix ans! . . . Jacques enfin! . . . Georges, encore, le plus jeune, le mal lui eût semblé moindre! Il se fut résigné peut-être! . . . N'avait-il pas même, jadis, dans la grande crise qui avait ébranlé son union, douté qu'il fût de lui? . . . Mais Jacques! . . . son Jacques à lui! . . .

Une colère le souleva:

— Pourquoi n'étais-tu pas là? Que faisais-tu?

La mère, à travers ses pleurs, balbutia:

— Mais je t'ai dit . . . J'étais occupée. Il est allé dans ta chambre, il a pris ton revolver, pour jouer. . . . Au bruit de l'explosion, j'ai couru . . . Georges, en même temps, se jetait, vers moi! . . .

Saisi d'un soupçon, Marville interrogea:

— Il se jetait vers toi? . . . Il se sauait?

— Sans doute! . . . Il a eu peur! . . .

Au trouble de sa femme, Marville eut l'intuition du drame:

— Tu mens! déclara-t-il. Ce n'est pas Jacques qui a pris le revolver! . . . C'est Georges! . . . Georges qui me l'a tué! . . . Où est-il?

— Je l'ai éloigné, tu comprends! Il est chez une voisine! . . .

— Chez qui? insista Marville.

Son regard effrayait la mère. Elle implora:

— Grâce!

Et un désespoir jaillit de son cœur dans une révolte immaîtrisable. Elle clama, éperdue:

— Oh! c'est trop! trop! Je suis trop punie!

— Punie? s'étonna Marville.

Une soudaine lumière se fit dans son esprit. Il cria, avec une fureur croissante:

— Punie! . . . C'est donc le châtiment! . . . Il n'est pas même de moi! . . .

Son horreur, pourtant, était si haute que sa colère défaillit, sous le souffle tragique de fatalité qui le courbait. La situation passait même la haine. Il dit:

— Va-t'en!

Puis il se détourna, revint près du petit lit.

La femme, cependant, se trainait sur les genoux:

— Je vous en supplie, laissez-moi ici jusqu'à ce qu'il n'y soit plus! . . . Après, oui, je partirai! Mais ne me chassez pas maintenant . . . Je souffre trop!

... Je suis à bout de forces! ...
Vous voyez bien que je suis folle! ...
Pourquoi vous ai-je dit cela? ...

Le vain bruit de ses paroles frappait à peine les oreilles de Marville. Effondré, pareil à une loque, il demeurait stupide comme si sa souffrance eût franchi les limites de la faculté de souffrir. Son silence rassura la mère. Elle se releva, osa peu à peu des mouvements par la pièce. Elle alluma des bougies, para le petit mort, puis se mit en prières.

Toute vie, alors, parut abolie, la terre lointaine. Eux-mêmes, dans le vacillement des flammes et le parfum des fleurs, étaient semblables à des ombres.

Le reste du jour, la nuit, coulèrent sans une parole, troublés seulement parfois d'un long gémissement, d'un sanglot convulsif. Le lendemain, Marville accomplit inconsciemment des actes nécessaires. Des événements se succédèrent autour de lui, auxquels son esprit n'avait point part; des gens se murent qu'il ne voyait ni n'entendait.

Une voix le tira de la stupeur farouche qu'il avait rapportée du cimetière. Debout dans ses voiles noirs, sans oser approcher, Mme. Marville offrait, d'un ton qui prie et qui espère encore pourtant:

— Je pars! Je vous ai fait trop de mal!

Et, comme il ne répondait pas tout de suite, elle se lamenta:

— Oh! pourquoi m'avez-vous donné autrefois? Pourquoi ne m'avez-vous pas tuée alors? C'eût été justice!

— De justice, dit Pierre sourdement, il n'y en a pas . . . puisque je suis puni aussi, puisque mon pauvre . . .

Il ne put prononcer le nom, la gorge barrée, et il reprit:

— Vous tuer? Non. C'est à moi de mourir!

La femme s'exalta:

— Oh! à moi aussi, alors!

— Le vôtre, dit Marville avec ameretume, vous consolera!

— Lui? Ne sera-t-il pas malheureux aussi? . . . Puis, consolée? Oh! non! Je ne veux pas être consolée!

Elle pleura. Marville, après un long

silence, dit, d'une parole lente, comme de rêve:

— Non, nulle consolation n'est possible! Nul oubli! . . . Partez, et nous ne pourrons même pas séparer nos deux pensées, nos deux souvenirs. Nos vies resteront liées quand même par la douleur. Nous serons pareils à deux ruines d'un même écroulement se renvoyant, à travers l'espace, l'écho du passé! . . .

Il songea un temps. Puis:

— L'un près de l'autre, nous ne pourrions que nous faire souffrir davantage!

Et une apété passa dans sa voix:

— Ah! souffrir davantage, n'est-ce pas souffrir autrement déjà? . . . Le seul apaisement à tant de peine est dans le pouvoir même de souffrir! . . . Chacun de nous augmentant sa souffrance de l'horreur et de la souffrance de l'autre! . . .

— Ou, peut-être, implora la femme, l'atténuant de la part qu'il en prendrait?

Marville poursuivait:

— Oui! . . . S'abreuver de la douleur jusqu'à y puiser l'ivresse avec la lie, jusqu'à y rencontrer enfin on ne sait quelle abominable et torturante volupté? . . .

Son regard, perdu dans le vide, se ressaisit. Il secoua la tête, comme devant une tentation vainue:

— Mais l'autre! soupira-t-il. L'autre! . . .

Puis il se tut, le front dans la main.

L'ombre, avec le déclin du jour, noyait peu à peu Marville et sa femme, aux deux extrémités de la pièce. Dans le silence, alors, une porte, soudain, s'entrebâilla. La voisine qui avait gardé Georges le ramenait, vêtu pour le départ. Ses paroles basses, qui expliquaient, se perdirent, et comme on ne lui répondait pas, elle se retira, laissant l'enfant. Une angoisse infinie palpitait. Lui, arrêté par un signe de terreur de la mère, demeurait immobile et craintif sous le jour pâle de la fenêtre. On entendait son petit souffle. Et, tout à coup, sa voix se leva.

— Pardon, papa!

Le bruit de sa voix, le mouvement de révolte de Marville l'effrayèrent. Mais,

plus effrayé encore du silence et de l'ombre, il reprit, de sa voix menue presque basse:

— Pardon! Je ne le ferai plus!
Un bref sanglot de la mère creva. Marville, lentement, avait porté ses regards vers l'enfant. Ardemment, il le dévisageait avec un air singulier, lui, l'étranger, le voleur, l'assassin, en qui se résumait tout le malheur et tout le crime. Et, sans doute, il se sentait près d'atteindre à cette volupté de la douleur; ou encore un orgueil le tenta de reculer les limites de sa souffrance. Ses traits, peu à peu, se détendirent:

— Oui, laissa-t-il tomber, lui aussi souffrira!

Il acheva de se tourner. Même, il commençait un geste héroïque d'appel et de pardon. Mais sa force le trahit. Son geste retomba. Il murmura seulement, d'une voix faible en détournant la tête:

— Qu'il s'éloigne quelque temps! . . . Plus tard . . . peut-être!

La mère l'emmêna, marchant tout bas.

L'ombre avait achevé de descendre lorsqu'elle revint. La voix de Marville y passa comme un souffle:

— Jeanne! appelait-il.
Elle s'élança:
— Pierre!
Et leurs sanglots se confondirent.



LES OISILLONS

Par FRANÇOIS FABIÉ

TU l'as cueilli trop tôt dans le rosier sauvage,
Ce nid qu'un imprudent jardinier te montra,
Ma fillette; et voilà des pleurs sur ton visage,
Parce que ta couvée avant ce soir mourra.

Vois-tu sur tes genoux, chaque fois que tu bouges,
Se soulever ces fronts aveugles et rasés,
Et s'ouvrir en criant toutes ces gorges rouges,
Où tu ne peux, hélas, mettre que des baisers?

Ils ont froid; ils ont faim; leur pauvre nid de mousse
Comme un vieux vêtement se déchire et s'en va,
Et ton haleine, encore qu'elle soit chaude et douce,
No saurait remplacer l'aile qui les couva.

Ils mourront. Et là-bas, sur sa branche déserte,
Leur mère en gémissant gardera jusqu'au soir,
Frétilante à son bec, quelque chenille verte
Pour les chers oisillons qu'elle espère revoir.

Va; cours lui rapporter sa friileuse famille;
Replace bien le nid au milieu du rosier.
Demain, à ton réveil, caché dans la charmille,
Leur père chantera pour te remercier.

BRIDGE HINTS

By D. B. VAN BUREN

WITH the years against you, never venture a weak heart declaration unless you have diamonds enough to pull you through.

Holding a commanding club, don't hesitate to tell the cook it looks like rain, if the soup justifies the declaration.

If you hold a good heart, don't discard it.

Never waste time attempting to finesse when your wife is obviously leading up to a new broadcloth suit.

If you find an unguarded knave, kick him and run.

If you are short of honors, never mind; many an obscure man dies rich.

With three good suits and four diamonds, it is safe to accept an invitation to a week-end party.

If your partner is a dummy, don't complain; she probably wouldn't have married you if she hadn't been.

With the score against you, tip the waiter liberally.

Do not make a practice of leading through the café door.



NOT FOR HIM

JOHNSON—That girl is a jewel.

MORRISON—Why don't you marry her?

JOHNSON—I can't furnish the setting.



THE world expects a man to make a fool of himself over a woman, but it never forgives a woman who makes a fool of herself over a man.



MARRY for money, and you wish you had married for love; marry for love, and you wish you had married for money.

AN APRIL SHOWER OF PLAYS

By GEORGE JEAN NATHAN

APRIL moi le deluge!

A If this phrase, like French farce, has lost many things—including grammar—in its adaptation for an American audience, it at least remains suggestive. While lacking every element of brilliancy, wit, humor, and similar qualities which haberdashers, débutantes and other dumb animals know as "clever," it is as expressive as an old gentleman whose sore toe has just been stepped on. It is likewise as succinct as the Venus di Milo's costume and as time saving as the Subway expresses and Reno. In four words you have the month's diary of a drama reviewer—April, me and the deluge of plays. If I were a married man, my wife would needs have had no cause for alarm during the last four weeks. I could have given satisfactory account of each of my nightly whereabouts by exhibiting a theater program. No dramatic critic gave his better half grounds for divorce in April. I can testify to that. There wasn't time.

Instead of succumbing to its usual attack of spring fever, the theater this season got the dramatic measles. It broke out in a lot of unexpected places. But, although dread complications such as "Molly May" set in, there was never any danger. The play doctors looked after the patient with considerable care.

April showers bring May flowers, and April plays bring Mayonnaise—usually. Not so this year, however. The April plays were decidedly vinaigrette. They had tang. And, in the adapted instances of "The Lady from Lobster Square," "The Whirlwind" and "The Three Daughters of Monsieur Dupont," the dressing, indeed, was *very* French.

To review dramatic April in a scholarly and proper manner, one should draw a line down a sheet of paper, place the "classics" on the left side, the leftovers on the right, adjust one's spectacles, frown deeply, run one's hand through one's hair and then devote all but the last three short paragraphs of these eight pages to a profound and methodical critical discussion of the plays on the heavy side of the line. If you expect me to do this, you are going to be disappointed. I flatly refuse to be "scholarly" in spring. In December a young critic's fancy may lightly turn to thoughts of Ibsen, but you may take my word for it that when the skies reflect the velvet violet of the Prettiest Girl's eyes and the flowers begin to vie with the fragrance of her hair, a critic feels like telling Ibsen to go chase himself—when it comes to the task of writing about him. I am not flippant; I am merely truthful. And any critic who declares that I do not know what I am talking about must be a *poseur*, a completely married person, or a disappointed man. I know. Last year at this time I executed a lengthy, learned and analytic treatise on the classic drama. It was precisely written, full of sound logic, rare data and valuable references, and consequently must have been exceedingly boresome.

Now, mind you, there are few presentations that give me as keen pleasure as the able renditions of these very classics. Do not mistake me. It is only from exhaustive reviews of them that I shrink at this glorious, quivering, soft-shirted time of the year. The robin does not sing in blank verse.

And so, I repeat, if you are seeking the professorial and academic viewpoint, I shall have to refer you elsewhere. If you want to be very serious, I can recommend to you many particularly excellent and satisfactory essays on the works of the dramatists in question, included among which are several of my own. And, as a guaranty of good faith, I will undertake to send prepaid to any address any of the latter that may be desired. But I have warned you, they make dull, intensely dull reading—in springtime.

“THE WHIRLWIND” is another of those Gallic dramas dealing with women who, although loved, honored, obeyed, dressed and fed by hard working husbands, feel impelled to regard themselves as martyrs because their narrow-minded spouses are opposed to their having lovers. What bigots, indeed, such French husbands must be! One cannot expect a wife to stay at home and darn hosiery all the time. Times have changed. Times have progressed. The advent of holeproof socks and the passing of enslaved womanhood have come about synchronically. Votes for women will be an assured reality in the near future. There remains but one small obstacle in the way, and just as soon as someone invents babies who don’t have the colic, that obstacle will have been eliminated.

“THE WHIRLWIND,” originally called “Baccarat,” is by Henri Bernstein, the young Parisian playwright who consistently indulges his dramatic self in those emotional landscapes that are commonly referred to as “big scenes.” A “big scene,” for the benefit of regular “first nighters” and others who do not understand the drama, is a terrific rumpus that occurs toward the end of a third act, and that, when the noise has died down, is figured out to have been nothing more than a woman who has told the truth, no matter how much it hurt her. Almost all these imported “big scenes” are the same. You will always find a lover in the woodpile. In the drama in question, the leading personage is one Helene, Countess Breche-

bel, who is a sort of seventh daughter of a seventh daughter of the Seventh Commandment, and who makes the most of it. She is a naughty girl, and consequently, a highly sympathetic heroine—to French audiences. To American audiences, however, Helene seems deserving of a good, sound spanking. She should be made to stand in a dark corner, go without dinner and go to bed an hour earlier than usual. Like several other boulevard heroines of whom we have taken recent notice, the Countess is a lady who cannot make her eyes—to say nothing of her p’s and q’s—behave. Her eyes are always on a bachelor’s apartment and her psalms and qualms are in the icebox. She is one of those typical French Chumps Elysées who is verily foolish enough to believe she deserves a glorifying Arc de Triomphe because her sin has been committed in the name of love. Helene, my dear, misguided young woman, I have little sympathy for you. You were brought up *very* badly.

To turn from the play to the player, however, different words may be written. In Mme. Marietta Olly the Shuberts have found an actress who is one of the worthiest “discoveries” in recent theatrical chronicles. Possessed of truly remarkable dramatic intelligence, fine perception and peculiarly attractive method, this player may be depended upon to win the increasingly loud plaudits of the American theater. She is a born *artiste*, devoid of the automatos emotionalism that has characterized some of the immigrant performers who have come to our stage via Ellis Island. And, as her accent vanishes, as her utterances, such as, “I am fool off humilyashun,” become clarified, the undeniable fact of her undoubted merit will become more saliently apparent to those who, as yet, may be prone to remain skeptical.

“THE WINTER’S TALE,” as done at the New Theater, was another ostrich plume in the cap of that institution. Presented on the so-called Shakespeare stage, produced in well-nigh perfect

taste and splendidly enacted, this classic was unanimously and deservedly applauded by all who witnessed it. Gentlemen with bald heads and gray whiskers, whose memories run back to the years when Union Square was the Great White Place, have assured me that this presentation was the finest ever given on the American stage, and, what is more, I am inclined to believe them. Certainly, in my briefer memory has there been no production to compare with it. Appealing by force of its very simplicity—regal simplicity though it was—and made heart gripping by its even and “starless” performance, this “WINTER’S TALE” is to be set down as one of the artistic triumphs of our native theater. The magnificent Miss Matthison gave wonderful life to Hermione, and the rest of the company, save possibly Henry Kolker as Leontes, aided nobly in the revivification of what Forty-second Street and Broadway calls “that statue play.”

We will now sing for a short while! No one in “MOLLY MAY” does—not for a minute. “MOLLY MAY,” according to the program, is an “original comic opera in three acts,” and it will undoubtedly be so regarded by hired girls, butchers’ boys, icemen, and regular patrons of vaudeville. It has been urged frequently in some disgruntled quarters that it is easy enough to criticize and pull things apart, but that, if the critic were called on to try his hand, he could not fashion anything one-half as good. Which, unquestionably, is often, very often, true. So there is no argument there. But, in the case of the “original comic opera” in point, I wish to state emphatically that if there is a dramatic commentator in New York City who cannot write a better libretto before breakfast some morning than that exploited in “MOLLY MAY,” he ought to surrender his position at once. And, as a mark of sincerity, I am perfectly willing to allow my name to be placed at the head of the list and to make the first try. Rodomontade? You haven’t seen “MOLLY MAY”! In the way of sheer stu-

pidity, this “entertainment” is superb. Miss Grace La Rue is starred in the production. While by no means devoid of all talent, this young woman’s chief genius consists in her ability to circumnavigate the stage in curiously clinging gowns into which it is difficult to conjecture how she inserts herself. Miss La Rue, however, has a certain swinging, dancing grace that is not so bad in its way. The play is presented by Byron Chandler, Miss La Rue’s husband, which indicates that marriage may or may not be a failure. If girls sang with their legs instead of their throats, the chorus would be in fine voice.

MRS. FISKE, and the Manhattan company played a four weeks’ engagement at the Lyceum Theater, presenting Ibsen’s “Pillars of Society,” Schnitzler’s “The Green Cockatoo” and Hauptmann’s “Hannele.” This charming, capable and entirely laudable actress, with her thoroughly proficient band of players headed by Holbrook Blinn, proved to be the same delight she has always been. Her performance of the role of Lona Hessel in the Ibsen play was a joy, and her impersonation of the little Hannele, while obviously lacking the soft, trembling, shaking note of real childhood, contained none the less the vibrant chord of an art that succeeded in compelling an illusion that hovered close, dangerously close, to the brink.

“PILLARS OF SOCIETY” requires no pen of mine for purposes of familiarization. And anyway, as I have warned you, this is spring. Suffice it to say that the performance was one of a most meritorious caliber, that it was staged with the usual Fiske craft and care, and that the acting left little to be desired. The portrayal of Miss Merle Maddern, who is decidedly worth watching henceforth, demands particular notice. “THE GREEN COCKATOO” was employed as a curtain raiser for “HANNELE.” It was likewise a hair raiser. With the action laid in a Parisian *cabaret* on the evening of the

fourteenth of July, 1789, it divulged a highly colored melodramatic episode in which the Bastile and the seducer of another man's wife were made to fall simultaneously. It was one of those pleasant little idyls indigenous to the Grand Guignol, that cute playhouse where villains are killed while you wait. Henri (Holbrook Blinn) was one of a number of actors who frequented the Green Cockatoo, and who, in return for wine and gold, entertained visitors with exaggerated recitals of supposititious crimes they had committed. Henri that day had married the fair Leocadie, an actress whose histrionic talent had found its chief exploitation in the alcove. His mind seething with love for his bride, the actor had conjured up a wild dramatic story of her faithlessness and of his murder of the Duc de Cadignan, her betrayer. His narrative held, thrilled and startled the gathered throng. Believing that he had been telling the truth, rather than acting, the whisper went to him that Leocadie *had* been false. Then—a delirious clamor in the street, the battering open of the doors, the streaming in of the frenzied populace with the cry of the tottering Bastile on their lips! A pause—and down the stairs rushed Cadignan. A sudden scuffle—another moment of tense silence—and the betrayer was dead by Henri's hand. A brushing aside of the closing crowd, a cry of anguish, and across the body of the Duc fell Leocadie, *cocotte* to the last. "Liberty!" screamed the hysterical throng and the picture closed. The playlet held one's interest from curtain to curtain, and while a bit deliberate at the outset, subsequently piled surprise on surprise in a manner fatal to *ennui*.

To be in a proper mood to enjoy "HANNELE" thoroughly, one must have suffered the recent loss of a close relative. Delirium, death and the coffin are scarcely the "props" of life's real comedy. One's mood has so much to do with one's appreciation of things dramatic. Moods are the critic's bugbear. He must fight against them, throttle them and cast

them from him. Your honest critic must avoid moods as he would avoid accepting cigars from managers. If he feels blue, he must smile. If he feels ill, he must grin. If he feels tired, he must sit up and be receptive. No matter what his mood, he must rise superior to it. When he enters the playhouse, he must always be in his normal frame of mind. The most uninteresting being in the world is a dramatic critic in the theater. He is a negative film exposing himself to more or less moving pictures. If he is interesting, it's a bad sign; it means he is in some sort of mood and has not put his mind fairly to the task before him. As I went to the theater to review "HANNELE," I was in a mood. I was happy. I knew that would never do, so I purposely allowed a portly negro to step on my foot before I entered the lobby. That balanced things and, accordingly, when I went to my seat I was my normal critical self. As that self, I may chronicle the fact that "HANNELE," as presented by the Fiske company, was impressive, beautiful, subduing. The story of the little child's dream of death and heaven held and moved one as might an eloquent organ in the deep cathedral twilight. It held and moved—that is, except when, in the course of the presentation, the producer saw fit to assist the unimaginative minds in the audience by garish displays of spectacular claptrap. For one, I prefer to have "angels" and "the golden stairway" left to me for conjuration. The sight of three healthy blondes draped in *crêpe de Chine* and standing in a pale blue horseshoe of incandescent lights does not impress me. My idea of angels is a bit different. To be sure, I may be wrong, but time alone can prove which of us is right. At the bottom of the program, under the cast, in the list of "extra characters," were these words: "Many large and small angels." That too, offended me. It sounded much like the barker at a Coney Island sideshow. But, for a' that, "HANNELE" was another notch of conquest in one of the most effective weapons in the

whole dramatic arsenal, the Fiske gun.

"THE LADY FROM LOBSTER SQUARE" is a not-different three-act French farce that concerns itself with subjects and episodes usually confined to the boudoir. The humor of the first act is obtained through confusing an umbrella with a young woman named Mabel, who is possessed of an extraordinarily democratic tendency in her love affairs. The humor of the second act is secured principally through an exceedingly intimate conversation between a young bride-to-be and her anxious mamma. The humor of the third act is extracted by giving the audience half a peep at a middle-aged man taking a shower bath. The pity of it all is that there is enough really good, clean fun buried in the farce, fun that might be brought out easily, to swing it to success without gutter smut. But the audiences seem to prefer the latter, after all. On the evening I saw the play, the theater was crowded with comparatively refined-looking women, whose sides shook with laughter at such quips as are frequently to be seen chalked on the board fences in the factory districts. The (expurgated) story of the farce has to do with a young man who is about to be married, but who lacks the bravery to inform his "lady friend" of his intention. For those who cannot imagine the rest, it is better not explained. The best thing to be said of the farce—and, in all fairness, it must be said—is that it is very well acted, Miss Georgia Caine, Fritz Williams and William Pruette giving especially good performances.

We will now sing again! "A SKYLARK" this time; book and lyrics by William Harris, Jr., music by Frank Dossert, and presented by Henry B. Harris. This was the latter manager's first dip into the musical comedy side of the theatrical *soufflé*, and he proved himself to be quite as adept a handler of the chorus girl as he was of "The Chorus Lady." The production was in complete taste, and the scene shown

in the second act, the mythical garden of the gods, afforded as pretty a stage picture as has been revealed in several seasons. Miss May De Sousa sang the principal songs and sang them pleasantly, and Miss Gertrude Vanderbilt danced the principal dances and danced them well. Then, too, there were show girls and actresses and broilers and squabs and ponies and tenors and John Slavin. Although the book of the play could scarcely have been characterized as a six-best-seller, the entertainment as a whole ran along trippingly to the final curtain.

PORTER EMERSON BROWNE is a firm believer in the dramatic value of kisses. Theatrically speaking, he is to the labial smack what Augustus Thomas is to Munsterburgology and Charles Klein to the library of the Bar Association. The power of the kiss is Mr. Browne's favorite theme. As a recipe for his plays, he takes one fresh woman with two fresh, highly seasoned lips, one man with the bones removed, mixes them well and then cooks up trouble. He gets the spineless man into a fearful stew and, garnishing the dish with appetizing dialogue, serves while hot. A year ago, this playwright took a Tenderloin Cleopatra and made the lady cast hypnotic eyes at a Fifth Avenue Antony. Antony, remembering the fact that he had a wife and child at home, looked the other way until—"Kiss me, my fool," said Cleo, and Antony's foot hit the moral banana peel. The drama started with the kiss. This year, in his latest play, "THE SPENDTHRIFT," Mr. Browne has taken an extravagant wife who works on the theory that the shortest way to a man's pocketbook is through one of these very kisses. When the husband, deciding to be firm, says, "No, dear, you cannot have any more money to spend," the wife looks at him lovingly and pats his cheek affectionately. Husband is unmoved. Wife pleads again, putting her arm about his neck. Still husband remains obdurate. Wife begs, implores and hugs him hard. And still husband persists, "I said

"No'!" Whereupon, Mr. Browne comes quickly to the lady's rescue. He makes her coo a moment, cuddle up closer, and then causes her to bring her mouth into immediate contact with husband's. And, after the resultant delicious and liqueficient token of affection, the parting of their lips and husband's parting with the money are simultaneous. And the drama starts.

"A Fool There Was" was characterized as "a play every husband should see." "THE SPENDTHRIFT" may be characterized as "a play every wife should see." It deals with big subjects—race and financial suicide. It may not succeed in imbuing wives with the immediate necessity of having twins, but it cannot fail to impress them with the advisability of looking out henceforth for the rainy day. That is what "THE SPENDTHRIFT" really is—a plea for the "rainy day." When that day comes, a man and wife need an umbrella much more than they need a baby. The fight against race suicide is all very well in its way, but what is needed first are cheaper umbrellas. Once the latter are assured, there need be no worry about the former. The problem, if not the issue, can then take care of itself. In the meantime, however, go see "THE SPENDTHRIFT." It is working in the right direction.

"LULU'S HUSBANDS" are a funny lot and is a funny play. In construction, the latter is much like the foregoing sentence. It adheres to all the strict grammatical rules of farce, employs doors and mistaken identity in the conventional plural, is singular in spots and puzzles one agreeably. Unlike the sentence in question, however, it is decidedly amusing. Adapted from the French of Maurice Soulie by Thompson Buchanan, this guess-who-my-wife-is pastime is filled with smiles that succeed in banishing the blues if not "The Blue Mouse." And yet the last named farce was not so infinitely more laugh provoking, after all, than this, its successor. Miss Mabel Barrison and Harry Conor have proved again that they

are the leading farcical tandem on the theatrical tanbark. Miss Louise Closser Hale, Robert Dempster and Edward Heron, in the present instance, are assisting them ably in tooling the vehicle on what promises to be a long run.

CURIOSITY enough, I had always been of the opinion that Beethoven was a composer. Only through seeing the New Theater's "dramatic biography" of that genius did I come to realize that he was an orator. True, there were suggestions here and there in the presentation that argued I may not have been mistaken entirely in my previous belief, but the exhibit as a whole showed up the delusion under which I had been laboring. Beethoven according to René Fauchois, who is responsible for the proscenium biography, was a profuse talker. He talked, talked, talked, ceasing only at rare intervals under the strong influence of "inspirations." On the face of the play, he was a sort of idealized Harry Von Tilzer.

The New Theater's presentation may be described as a drama in three flats—or acts—with the "lower hand" left out. It lacked dramatic harmony. It was drama played with one finger. As a matter of record, however, the program admitted this. "'Beethoven,'" it allowed, "does not pretend to be a play in the ordinary use of the word." So further criticism of it as drama would be unfair. Viewed in the light of a musical, rather than a dramatic, biography, it proved to be not alone interesting, but inspiring. The rendition of various selections from the musician's works, insinuated into the stage pictures, lent an eerie, haunting note to the presentation that was long in taking leave of the senses. If there was one criticism more generally just than any other, it was to be directed against the prevailing melancholic key in which the "biography" was registered. Beethoven was made to talk of his art as if something had died, of his futile loves as if his heart had been broken in childhood by his governess,

and of life in general as if it were one long, sad song. One could not, try as one would, get it out of one's head that the poor old genius had had an extremely vexatious liver. And appreciating that such was not actually the case, the blame must be laid at the door of the studio of M. Fauchois. The general manner of the production was in the New Theater's established good taste. Donald Robertson played the part of Beethoven. There were some persons who liked his performance.

"THE THREE DAUGHTERS OF MONSEUR DUPONT" is the second play by Eugiene Brieux to be produced in this country by Laurence Irving. Like "The Affinity," it is brilliantly written, interesting to the startling point and *new*. Brieux is a remarkable dramatist. He combines the almost feminine finesse of a Clyde Fitch with the broad, blunt, masculine sweep of a Eugene Walter, and to these qualities brings further suggestions of an exceptional dramatic sense describable in no concrete playwriting terms. He opens the door of a household, and poking his finger under its calm surface, shows you the drama rumbling all unsuspected underneath. Then he withdraws his finger and allows the door to close behind him and the household to go on as it has before. His plays end where they begin. They prove nothing; they seek deliberately to prove nothing. And, in proving nothing—in the accepted theatrical sense of "proof"—they prove everything. Brieux works in circles—like a merry-go-round. You finish where you start, but you see and hear a lot of peculiar things as you are going round. Some of the peculiar things that come to your attention while this play is revolving are an exciting "sex against sex" mental and physical fight between a man and woman, a brassy clash between sin and virtue as represented by two sisters of the same blood, and a Boccaccio climax to the second act that, for sheer audacity, must look far afield if it would encounter an equal.

If Miss Mabel Taliaferro did nothing more than stand perfectly still on the stage for two hours, it would be entirely worth one's while to go to the theater to see her. And, speaking for myself, I would not even go out between the acts. For, under the whole American proscenium arch there is disclosed no fairer, no more winsome, no more compelling and attractive a personality. There are some cranky old ladies and cross males, however, who might not be satisfied with this. A reviewer, even in spring, must be cautious and not forget that a verse to a lady's eyebrow, no matter how sincere, is, after all, hardly the highest form of dramatic criticism. And so, to gratify the punctilious, the reviewer will proceed to hand down an opinion of "THE CALL OF THE CRICKET," in which the charming young actress has recently made her appearance. If you are the kind of person who swears by the type of drama in which a husband stabs another man full of holes for betraying his wife and then commits suicide by shooting himself in the presence of the fainting, faithless one, you may disagree with what I have to say. I would much prefer, in that case, that you do not read further. I somehow like "THE CALL OF THE CRICKET." It tells a nice little story of a dear little girl who marries unhappily and holds her ground until the sun shines again, in a nice little way. The sentiment is good, clean sentiment with a sense of humor. It is not the kind that sits in the moonlight and indulges in gambols of corset squashing embrace and osculatory slobber. "THE CALL OF THE CRICKET" is not that kind of a play. Its lovers fight and laugh and kiss and sing and cry. It isn't in Zenda, it isn't in the Bronx that they love; it is in the place between—the real, everyday world. But if you don't believe in love, you will like Miss Taliaferro anyway. And you may, you may change your mind.

ONE is not above conjecturing whether the present vogue of Ibsen on Broadway is not to be associated

in some manner with the recent pronounced interest evinced in the Eusapia Palladino school of spiritism. Symbolism and spiritualism are correlative sports. He who mentally eschews the former will jest at the latter, and vice versa. In different words, you cannot play one without the other. To impress oneself with spiritualism, one must make oneself believe that when a table is tipped over by a sly jab of the medium's chubby knee, the implied symbolic inference is that the "control" has accepted his invitation to the seance. When something brushes against one's leg in the darkened chamber, one must accept the dainty jostle to be a symbolic indication of the presence of a spirit rather than of a plain, everyday black poodle dog. And when the lady, to whom one has handed over five dollars for the privilege of conversing with one's dear departed Aunt Caroline, cunningly raps on the table with a ring on the second finger of her left hand, one must accept the mysterious taps to be symbols of Aunt Carrie's perfect willingness to divulge some intimate sidelights on her life in heaven. The fact that one never had an Aunt Caroline must be regarded as of no consequence. One must believe entirely or not at all, and a little discrepancy like that mentioned must not be taken as a valid argument against the whole. So it is with Ibsen, the Palladino of the drama. To believe in Ibsen, you must accept the simplest of his dramatic mechanics to be deeply symbolic. This has been told you so often that subconsciously you probably have become converted and are, the most of you, eager to see the Aunt Carrie in every word, every line, every situation of the Ibsen pen. Moreover, you *do* see Aunt Carrie. You are quite positive. And maybe you are right. Who knows?

He who peeks skeptically under the table to note the location of the Ibsen knee is either committing a literary sacrilege or is "fresh." What is the use of spoiling a perfectly good seance? Why be a doubter, an iconoclast? Why not leave well enough alone? We will!

The latest Ibsen seance was held in the new Thirty-ninth Street Theater, and Mme. Alla Nazimova was the medium. The evening's table tapping was called "LITTLE EYOLF." It was carried off impressively and was pleasingly Ibsententious. The Norwegian cult cannot but be immensely gratified by the presentation. And even if they are not, the beautiful new playhouse will soothe them. The refreshing color scheme is rose, but, incidentally, with theaters going up daily, it is safe to predict that this is not the last rose of summer.

BARNUM and Bailey's three-ring drama in Madison Square Garden and the presentation of "ALIAS JIMMY VALENTINE" with a cast composed entirely of children, were two features of the month that must not be omitted in the general chronicle. This season's "sensation" in the former was a young gentleman, modestly calling himself Desperado, who permitted himself to be hoisted to the roof and thence made a dive through the air to a slippery slide, from which he glided gracefully to the ground via his tummy. My friend, the Chronic Faultfinder, says that the circus was the best he had ever seen. He drank lemonade, ate peanuts, tickled the animals, threw rings at a cane and, when we got home, thanked me for having taken him. That is something he seldom does, so he must have been telling the truth.

The Lieblers' "squab" production of Paul Armstrong's splendid detective-thief melodrama was one of the really delightful things of the season. Each one of the roles was portrayed by a youngster, and the result was a remarkably flawless and entirely ingratiating presentation—the best of the sort I have ever seen. Donald Gallaher, in the part assumed by H. B. Warner, gave a performance surprising for its complete intelligence, and Irving Glick and tiny Miss Alma Sedley, as Doyle, the detective, and Rose Lane, the thief's sweetheart, respectively, played in a manner that might be copied to advantage by some Broadway actors and actresses many years their senior.

THE GREATEST OF AMERICAN WRITERS

By H. L. MENCKEN

HOW long does it take a new idea to gain lodgment in the professorial mind? The irreverent ignoramus may be tempted to answer six days and six nights, or just as long as it took to manufacture and people the world; but any such answer would be a gross and obvious underestimate. Some day a painstaking statistician, putting aside his beloved death rates and export tables, will take the trouble to give us more satisfactory figures. He will determine, for example, with mathematical accuracy, just how many years, months, weeks and days elapsed between the publication of "The Origin of Species" and the abandonment of Genesis by the professor of "natural history" in, say, Amherst College. He will find out for us, again, exactly how long was required to make the first scholastic convert to Sidney Lanier's sound but revolutionary theory of English verse. And finally, he will measure for us, with a dependable tape, the hiatus between the appearance of "Huckleberry Finn" and its acceptance by any reputable professor of literature, tutor, lecturer or high school pundit as a work of art of the first rank.

This last hiatus, I suspect, was of exactly twenty-five years' length, to a day. And my suspicion is grounded upon three facts, to wit:

(A) On March 15, 1885, the first American edition of "Huckleberry Finn" was published in New York.

(B) On March 15, 1910, or just a quarter of a century later, the Adams Express Company dropped on my door-

step a copy of "ESSAYS ON MODERN NOVELISTS," by William Lyon Phelps, a Harvard master of arts, a Yale doctor of philosophy, a former instructor in English at Harvard, and now the Lampson professor of English literature at Yale.

(c) I found in that book the first honest and hearty praise of "Huckleberry Finn," by a college professor in good standing, that these eyes had ever encountered, and the first faint, trembling admission, by the same sort of professor, that Mark Twain was a greater artist than Oliver Wendell Holmes.

After all, the sun *do* move! After all, there is yet hope! If it is possible, in the year 1910, for a college professor to admit that Clemens was a greater artist than Holmes, without thereby imperiling his salary and the honor of his craft, then it may be possible by 1950 for him to admit that Clemens was a greater artist than Irving, than Lowell, than Fenimore Cooper, than all and sundry of the unbearable bores whose "works" are rammed into the heads of schoolboys by hunkerous pedagogues, and avoided as pestilences by everyone else.

Fortunately for Dr. Clemens, he didn't have to wait for the college professors. Long before the first of them began to harbor thoughts of treachery to the "Tales of a Traveler" and "The Last of the Mohicans," a large number of less orthodox persons began to sense the colossal merits of "Huckleberry Finn." One of the first of them, unless

memory errs, was the late Sir Walter Besant, himself a writer of experience and very much alive to the difficulties of the trade. Back in the early '90's his remarkable analysis of the story was printed, and soon afterwards a number of distinguished English critics adopted his view of it. Then came the gradual disappearance of Mark Twain, the glorified buffoon, and the rise of Samuel Langhorne Clemens, the master of letters. He lived just long enough to see the metamorphosis of his fame accomplished. Twenty-five years ago the world roared over his extravagances and swore that they were fully as funny as the quips of Tom Hood and Petroleum V. Nasby, Bill Nye and Josiah Allen's Wife. Fifteen years ago there arose folk who were rash enough to compare him, with some hesitation, to Holmes and Sam. Foote, Farquhar and Wycherley. And finally, just before he died, it began to be bruited about that a literary artist of world rank was among us, the greatest that the United States had yet produced—a greater than all our Hawthornes and Lowellses—a peer to Swift, Fielding, and Defoe—perhaps even a peer to Cervantes, Molière and Rabelais.

There is no space here to discuss the grounds for that last theory. You will find them in parts of "A Connecticut Yankee," in parts of "A Tramp Abroad" and other books, in every line of "Huckleberry Finn." The pictures of the mighty Mississippi, as the immortal Huck presents them, do not belong to buffoonery or to pretty writing, but to universal and almost flawless art. Where, in all fiction, will you find another boy as real as Huck himself? In sober truth, his equals, young or old, are distressingly few in the world. Rabelais created two, Fielding one, Thackeray three or four and Shakespeare a roomful; but you will find none of them in the pages of Hawthorne or Poe or Cooper or Holmes. In Kipling's phrase, Huck stands upon his feet. Not a freckle is missing, not a scar, not a trick of boyish fancy, not a habit of boyish mind. He is, in brief,

Everyboy—the archetype of all other boys—the most delightful boy that ever stole a ginger cake or tortured a cat.

Coming back to Dr. Phelps's book, it may be said for it that its courageous championing of Huck is by no means its only merit. To me, at least, his estimates of Howells, Ollivant and De Morgan seem a bit overenthusiastic, but he says many shrewd things about Kipling, Sudermann, Björnson and Hardy, and his general attitude is that of open-minded fairness. He has, in a word, produced a book of criticism with ideas in it, and it is to be hoped that he will follow it with another of the same sort, but dealing, let us say, with Henry James, George Meredith, Joseph Conrad, George Moore, Frank Norris, H. G. Wells and some lesser men. The present book, it may be mentioned at the end, contains an admirable bibliography by Andrew Keogh. (*Macmillan, \$1.50.*)

THE spring fiction continues to come in by the cartload. Some of it is good; some of it is indifferent, and some of it is atrocious. "LOST FACE," a new volume of short stories by Jack London (*Macmillan, \$1.50*), belongs to the first class, and takes rank near the top of that class. It is seldom, indeed, that one encounters seven better short stories. They have good form, dramatic movement and interesting personages, and although the wild Alaska of the early days is the scene of all of them, they are widely various in theme and treatment. The book is worth reading. It takes away the flat taste left by Mr. London's bad novel, "Martin Eden."

Another volume of short stories is "MR. CARTERET," by David Gray (*Century Co., \$1.00*). Three of them are tales of the hunting field in Mr. Gray's familiar manner; one is a golfing story, and the two that remain are unclassified. A certain facility is visible in these harmless fictions, but it cannot be said that they belong to the ages.

"THE CLIMAX," by George C. Jenks (*Fly, \$1.50*), is a novelization of Ed-

ward Locke's play of the same name. Mr. Jenks has performed his depressing task in the fashion of an earnest artisan.

"THE GODPARENTS" next—a chronicle of true love by Grace Sartwell Mason (*Houghton-Mifflin*, \$1.25). The godmother in the case is a maiden of thirty-two, and the godfather is a dashing devil of thirty-six—"noticeable anywhere for his height and the powerful swing of his shoulders." On page 9 the reader begins to suspect that the two will make a match of it; on page 13 that suspicion changes to moral certainty; and after that the waiting grows rather tedious. Refined and ladylike stuff!

"A DISCIPLE OF CHANCE," by Sarah Dean (*Stokes*, \$1.50), is a great deal more exciting. The scene is London; the time is the careless eighteenth century, and Harry Walpole and George Selwyn are among the folk we meet. We look into White's chocolate house; we see a lot of gambling, flirting and fighting, and we hear a lot of "la's," "lud's," "ecod's," "egad's" and "slife's." A long and powerful yarn.

"MY HEART AND STEPHANIE," by R. W. Kauffman (*Page*, \$1.50), is a Zenda story with all of the orthodox thrills and a number of new ones. If you like Zenda stories you will find it an unalloyed delight.

"THE EDDY," by Clarence L. Cullen (*Dillingham*, \$1.50), is the tedious and unconvincing tale of a scarlet lady who is saved from Gehenna by her virtuous young daughter. If this Mr. Cullen is the same who wrote "Tales of the Ex-Tanks" I wonder what has become of his sense of humor?

"THE CARLETON CASE," by Ellery H. Clark (*Bobbs-Merrill*, \$1.50), is a melodrama in the fashionable manner, with a handsome hero, a dastardly villain and a host of other familiar personages.

THREE novels dealing with human existence in the South come next, and in each of them an invading Northerner is a principal figure. In "BY INHERITANCE," by Octave Thanet

(*Bobbs-Merrill*, \$1.50), that Northerner is a wealthy New England spinster. She has half resolved to devote a couple of millions to the establishment of a negro university, with a Harvard bred mulatto at its head, when a fortunate chance takes her down to the Arkansas black belt. What she sees there convinces her—as the same spectacle must convince any other sane Caucasian—that the higher learning is not for the ex-chattel. The book is far from a masterpiece, but it is written earnestly and with skill, and it shows a sound knowledge of Southern problems and the Southern people.

"THE SCAR," by Warrington Dawson (*Small-Maynard*, \$1.50), has no such merits. Extravagant praise by Theodore Roosevelt is printed on the cover, but that praise only proves that Mr. Roosevelt is an extremely incompetent critic, as Mr. Dawson himself is an extremely incompetent novelist. His picture of the decaying Southern aristocracy shows a touch now and then of veracity, but his characters in the main are stuffed dummies, his incidents are often incredible and his observations have a flat, sophomore flavor. You will have to go a long way to find more ridiculous writing than is to be found on page 381 of this amateurish fiction.

"CALEB TRENCH," by Mary Imlay Taylor (*Little-Brown*, \$1.50), is a Southern story merely by the arbitrary choice of the author. It deals with the love affair of a male commoner and a female patrician, and the scene might be moved to Maine, Oregon or Bavaria without material damage. As a tale it has a number of commonplace virtues, but as a social study it is entirely worthless.

IN attempting a review of Eden Phillpotts's latest novel, "THE THIEF OR VIRTUE" (*Lane*, \$1.50), I labor under a crushing handicap, for I have found it entirely impossible to read the book. The author's tedious farmers do not interest me; his efforts at elaborate description set me to snoring. But the fault, I am quite ready to ad-

mit, may be mine rather than his, for a number of eminent critics hold that he is a master of the literary art. Perhaps it may be well to print what some of them say, in lieu of the review that I am unable to offer. The critic of the Boston *Evening Transcript*, for example, calls "THE THIEF OF VIRTUE" a "masterpiece of English fiction" and ventures the view that a "greater triumph" would be unthinkable. The critic of the Louisville *Post* calls the author a genius; the critic of the Chicago *Record-Herald* says that his work "ranks with the best fiction of the day"; the critic of the *Nation* opines that he "will do for Devon what Mr. Hardy did for Wessex"; and Miss Jeannette L. Gilder, as if not to be outdone, calls him "the foremost living English novelist, with the one exception of Thomas Hardy." I submit these extremely flattering opinions in good faith and without comment. It surprises me, of course, to hear that Mr. Phillpotts is a greater artist than Mr. Moore, Mr. Conrad or Mr. James, but experience has taught me the wisdom of throttling my scoffs, even in the presence of the incredible.

CONSIDER now the case of John Ordham, English diplomat and sexual vivisectionist, as it is set forth, with copious detail, in "TOWER OF IVORY," by Gertrude Atherton (*Macmillan*, \$1.50). John goes to Munich to perfect his German and at once finds himself in the midst of amorous adventures. One of the fair ones is Frau von Wass, the Bulgarian and vulgarian wife of a fat Bavarian Royal Privy Counsellor. Another is the sweet young Fräulein Mabel Cutting, daughter of the designing Momma Cutting, out of America come. A third—a twilight, scarcely phosphorescent affair is this—is the highwellborn Princess Nachmeister, who has a palace in the Königstrasse, with a high-walled garden extending through to the Kaulbachstrasse, and is a lifelong friend to S.M. the Queen Mother and to S.M., the mad King Ludwig. And finally, and most important of all, there is the Roy-

al Bavarian Court Singer, Gräfinn von Tann, whose stage name is Margarethe Styr, and whose real name back home in America was Maggie Hill.

John is engulfed by a wild passion for the Court Singer, but toward the middle of the book it cools, and he falls in love with Mabel. So great is his love, indeed, that he loses appetite and cannot sleep of nights. Furthermore, he marries Mabel—and straightway discovers that she has deficiencies as an Intellectual Companion. Just as they are about to become parents he dashes off to Munich to see his old flame, the Court Singer, and thereafter she is his only goddess. He lures her to London, and Mabel being dead by now, begs her to marry him. She refuses flatly. And why? Because she has a past of appalling blackness—a past involving an immoral drummer and the white slave trade—and she fears that it will blast his diplomatic career. In the end she commits suicide, leaving orders that her body be cremated and the ashes cast upon the Isar. As for John, he has a spell of brain fever—blest reminder of Victorian days—recovers, grows paunchy and gay, and dies finally as Lord Bridgminster.

It is difficult, of course, to take Mrs. Atherton and her fantastic creatures seriously, but it is not at all difficult to read her book. She is, indeed, one of the most entertaining fictioneers now before the public, and if it be urged against her that her stories lead us nowhere and throw no light whatever upon the problems of human existence, it may be answered in her defense that such faults seem to be endemic among all writers who combine her nationality with her sex.

"PREDESTINED," by Stephen French Whitman (*Scribner's*, \$1.50), is sterner stuff. Here we have the story of a weak young man who succumbs to whiskey and women. The author has a firm grip upon his principal personages; he has observed accurately and he knows how to write. His book, in brief, is one of the best first novels of

the year. In less skillful hands it might have degenerated into nasty melodrama; as it is, there is a flavor of tragedy almost Greek in this poor wretch's struggle against irresistible destiny. Let Mr. Whitman be made welcome to the synagogue; his later writings will be worth reading.

To Marian Cox, author of "THE CROWDS AND THE VEILED WOMAN" (*Funk-Wagnalls*, \$1.50), the welcome must be less hearty. It is difficult, indeed, to put away the hope that this first novel will be her last. Not that she has nothing to say! On the contrary, she is alive with startling theories about all things human, and some of them are decidedly interesting. But her book should have been cast in a frankly homiletic form. As it is, it is a tale with but three characters, all entirely incredible, and one of them talks incessantly from cover to cover. There is no end to his gab. He makes speeches of six, eight and ten pages, and when he is not on hand to speechify he writes interminable letters. His central doctrine seems to come, in the end, to this: that life is a device for enabling the soul to escape the ennui of eternity. I have no quarrel with that doctrine, but it strikes me, all the same, that it adds little to our store of knowledge.

"THE PERSONAL CONDUCT OF BELINDA," by Eleanor Hoyt Brainard (*Doubleday-Page*, \$1.50), and "ACCORDING TO MARIA," by Mrs. John Lane (*Lane*, \$1.50), are good-humored farces. In the first we are taken to Europe with a personally conducted party and come upon adventures which tend to grow more and more amorous as we mosey along. A cleanly and diverting fiction for the domestic hearth.

The heroine of Mrs. Lane's chronicle is a Mrs. Samuel Smith, wife of S. Smith, a grocer with "a retail soul." Growing socially ambitious, Mrs. Smith badgers S. into converting himself into S. Smith, Ltd. Thereafter the tale is one of social climbing—a comedy ever amusing.

"THOSE BREWSTER CHILDREN," by Florence Morse Kingsley (*Dodd-Mead*, \$1.00), is a treatise upon the rearing of children with a sugar coating of incident and dialogue. The walloping of the little devils is deprecated.

"THE HOUSE OF MYSTERY," by Will Irwin (*Century Co.*, \$1.15), deals with Suggestion, that new and most fascinating mystery of the college professors, the magazine section romancers and the woman's clubs. Specifically, we see the fair Annette Markham completely in the power of that immoral psychic, Madame Paula, and learn how the skeptical Dr. W. H. Blake, sometime contract surgeon to the Philippine Army of Occupation, rescues her from those unclean clutches, falls in love with her, marries her and carries her off to Europe for a two years' honeymoon.

LIFE is short, but the procession of novels is long. Let us be brief! "THE INTRUDING ANGEL," by Charles Marriott (*Lane*, \$1.50), is a tale in the contemporary English manner. That is to say, it derives from "Dodo." The husband-hero takes a clergyman's widow for his mistress, and his wife takes a writer of pornographic novels for her lover. The general air is that of refined and somewhat melancholy indecency.

"THE GIRL FROM HIS TOWN," by Marie Van Vorst (*Bobbs-Merrill*, \$1.50), is an American best seller, with a dashing hero from Blairstown, Montana. He goes to England, wins the heart of a duchess—and then throws her over for a virtuous young chorus girl from "back home."

In "THE RED HOUSE ON ROWAN STREET," by Roman Doubleday (*Little-Brown*, \$1.50), we encounter our old friend, John Alden. His name is now Hugh Burton, and he travels a thousand miles to ask Miss Leslie Underwood to be kind enough to marry young Philip Overman. And thus begins a galloping and diverting tale of mystery, which ends with "a crimson tide" flooding Leslie's face and Hugh hold-

ing her hands. "But poor Philip!" protests the happy Leslie. "How *can* we ever tell him?" "Leave that to me," says the lordly Hugh with a queer laugh.

IN Cale Young Rice's "MANY GODS" (*Doubleday-Page*, \$1.25), earnestness must make up for the lack of many other qualities necessary to a poet. Mr. Rice seems to be an assiduous and copious rhapsodist, but so far as I have been able to discover his industry has produced little worth reading. The verses in the present volume are notably chiefly for a certain very irritating roughness. The author's ear is apparently defective; he has no feeling whatever for rhythm. Some of his lines—the second in the third stanza of "A Song of the Sects," for example—must needs give acute discomfort to every reader with the rudiments of a musical sense. And the thoughts discoverable in his verses seldom soothe the pains inflicted by their atrocious form. Mr. Rice, in brief, is a bard who has very little to say, and who too often says that little with an extremely distressing lisp.

IN "ROSEMARY AND PANSIES," by Effie Smith (*Badger*, \$1.00), the workmanship is a good deal better. Miss Smith's message to the world, it must be confessed, is not very startling, but the somewhat obvious thoughts that she seeks to express are set forth with no little grace.

The same facility is visible in parts of "ROSES AND RYE," by A. Maria Crawford (*Badger*, \$1.50). In this author's work, however, a sort of banal sentimentality usually takes the place of sentiment.

Coming to "RANDOM SHOTS," by E. Marie Sinclair (*Badger*, \$1.00), we are in the midst of high school fustian. If you are eighteen years old and passionately in love, it will thrill you; if you are older and less romantic, it will afford you many a gentle grin.

"SHAKESPEARE IN LIMERICK," by Brainerd McKee (*Morton*, \$1.00), is the

labor of a man who set himself the task of writing a limerick upon each and every one of the plays and poems of old William. The enterprise was as fantastic as that of those frenzied missionaries who seek to convert the East Side Yiddishers to Christianity, but not nearly so hopeless, as the event demonstrates, for some of Mr. McKee's limericks have a good deal of humor in them.

NÄCHST kommt "ERDKLÄNGE" von Sebastian Frank Wendland (*De Vinne*, \$1.25). Dieser sehr ernste Dichter schreibt über mannigfaltige Welträtsel. Er erörtert Philosophie, das Ewige und den Tod. Aber er hat auch das Gehör für lyrische Musik. Zum Beispiel, zwei kleine Gedichte, "Morgen" und "Abend," sind sehr preiswürdig.

"THE GIANT AND THE STAR," by Madison Cawein (*Small-Maynard*, \$1.25), is a book of ballads and jingles for children. Their merits are not overpowering. Here and there, true enough, one encounters a stanza fit for the First Readers, but too often the author seems to forget that children's verses, to sing themselves into the memories of the little folk, must be technically perfect. In other words, it is a waste of paper to print jingles unless they really jingle. Mr. Cawein's do not. His clumsy inversions, his stumbling meters and his lines ending with prepositions are faults which must inevitably torture any youngster who tries to follow him.

"ORESTES," by Richard Le Gallienne (*Kennerley*, \$1.00), is a workmanlike effort to tell anew the ancient story of Electra, Orestes and Clytemnestra—workmanlike, but scarcely inspired. Mr. Le Gallienne explains, in an introduction, how he came to tackle the enterprise. The suggestion that he do so was made by William Faversham, the actor, who yearned to play Orestes to Massenet's music, but found fault with Leconte de Lisle's "Les Èrinnyes," for which the music was written. Accordingly, Le Gallienne essayed to make an

entirely new drama, fitting it to Massenet's score as the paper is fitted to the wall. The result is a play with not a few purple passages, but with very little dramatic effectiveness. Compared to Arthur Symons's splendid English version of Hugo von Hofmannsthal's "Elektra," it seems puny and lumbering.

THERE are upward of nine hundred pages of text, not to speak of scores of full page illustrations, four maps and innumerable portraits of Maxine Elliott in "ASTYANAX," an epic romance by the Hon. Joseph M. Brown, governor of the republic of Georgia and exterminator of Hoke Smith. I began to read the book back in the year 1909, but the *gemütlichkeit* of the holidays broke me of the habit, and so I am still some distance from the end. I am able, however, to issue a sort of preliminary bulletin, giving the general drift of the work. It is, in brief, an attempt to do for America what Homer, "or someone else of that name," did for Greece. In its historical framework it belongs to the school of the immortal Ignatius Donnelly, for it seems to assume that America was invaded in remote ages by adventurers from Troy, who came by way of the lost continent of Atlantis.

Upon this framework Mr. Brown hangs an epic of great deeds and consuming love, written in passionate prose, with occasional rises to Timroodic blank verse. He is familiar with the laws and customs of the Aztecs and Incas; he has immersed himself in strange lores and mysterious philosophies; he has a footnote ready to prove every sword thrust and metaphor. The book is not one to be measured by ordinary standards, for it is not a mere book at all, but a whole literature—the national literature of the republic of Georgia. The Georgians have already testified to their pride in it by electing Mr. Brown their governor. In the face of that impressive verdict it would be presumptuous for an accursed Northerner to point out flaws. All I dare venture is the thought that the

taste for Georgian literature must be an acquired one, and that its acquirement must be a painful business.

It is seldom, indeed, that two charming books of essays reach me in one day, for the essay is an art form but scantly cultivated in these electric times. The reason therefore is to be found, I suppose, in the fact that we are all afflicted by a universal earnestness—that we have come to regard life too much as a science and too little as an art. Now, earnestness is usually fatal to the essay, for its purpose is not to demonstrate a proposition or rub in a moral, but merely to communicate a mood. The essayist, in a word, must show a flavor of irresponsibility, or he ceases to be an essayist and becomes a dialectician or a homilete or a teacher or a mad mullah. The thing he writes must have what the musicians and painters call atmosphere, and if it has that it needs nothing else. He is a sort of Debussy—or, better still, a Hadyn—of the written word. Let him but charm us as Haydn charms us with his sparkling rondos, his crystal minuets, his simple variations—and we ask nothing more of him.

Compositions which show that simplicity are rare just now—but here, as I have said, are two books of them, the one by Max Beerbohm and the other by Adrian H. Joline. The ingenious Max calls his volume "YET AGAIN" (Lane, \$1.50), and it is made up of contributions rescued from the files of various newspapers, magazines and reviews. He deals with a vast variety of subjects, but the same note of mellow geniality is always dominant. He is not trying to convert the world nor to knock down the two thousand firm faiths which now set it by the ears, but merely to laugh gently at its follies and to give a word of praise to its virtues. One of the essays, in which Max mourns the sorrows of the newspaper editorial writer who is doomed to "write at top speed, on a set subject, what he thinks the editor thinks the proprietor thinks the public thinks nice," is delicious enough to save a book of far less merit.

Mr. Joline's volume is called "AT THE LIBRARY TABLE" (*Badger*, \$1.50), and is made up of the confessions and opinions of an old-fashioned booklover. It must be said, however, that Mr. Joline is not actually so antique as he would have us believe. He pretends, in places, to eighty, ninety, 100 and even to 150 years, but he is really a very lively youth of threescore. Two amusing chapters upon William Harrison Ainsworth and G. P. R. James contain new contributions to the histories of those assiduous scriveners. The whole book is rambling, anecdotal, charming. It has the atmosphere which maketh the essay.

A FASCINATING narrative is that offered by Harry A. Franck in "A VAGABOND JOURNEY AROUND THE WORLD" (*Century Co.*, \$3.50). Mr. Franck, after taking his bachelor's degree at the University of Michigan and trying teaching for a while, resolved to see the world, and having but a small store of current money, he resolved further to work his way. The result was a year, and a half of careless knocking about—first in Europe, then along the Mediterranean and finally in the Far East. The book that Mr. Franck has made is no customary traveler's tale, with dull catalogues of pictures and minute accounts of extortionate hotels. Not at all. In the whole of his merry journey he seldom set foot in gallery or hotel. Instead, he took pot luck with the beachcombers of Marseilles and Colombo, the perambulating grafters of Hindustan, the rascals of Port Said, the happy jack tars of the Seven Seas. His story is told with charming *naïveté*; he goes into details; he discourses of things that the Pullman and Cunard tourist never wots of. A book worth reading. A welcome break in the avalanche of best sellers, bad poetry and tomes upon psychotherapy.

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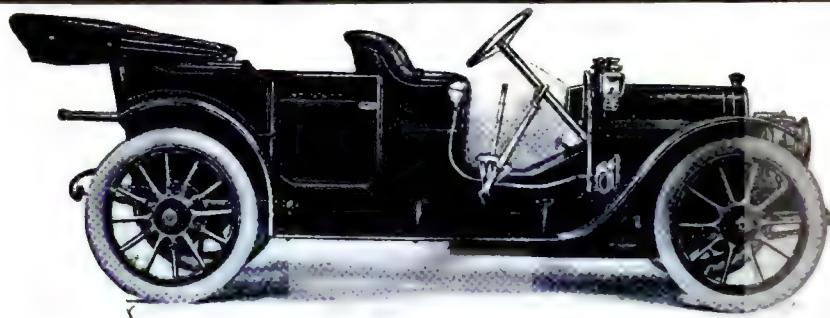
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